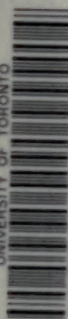


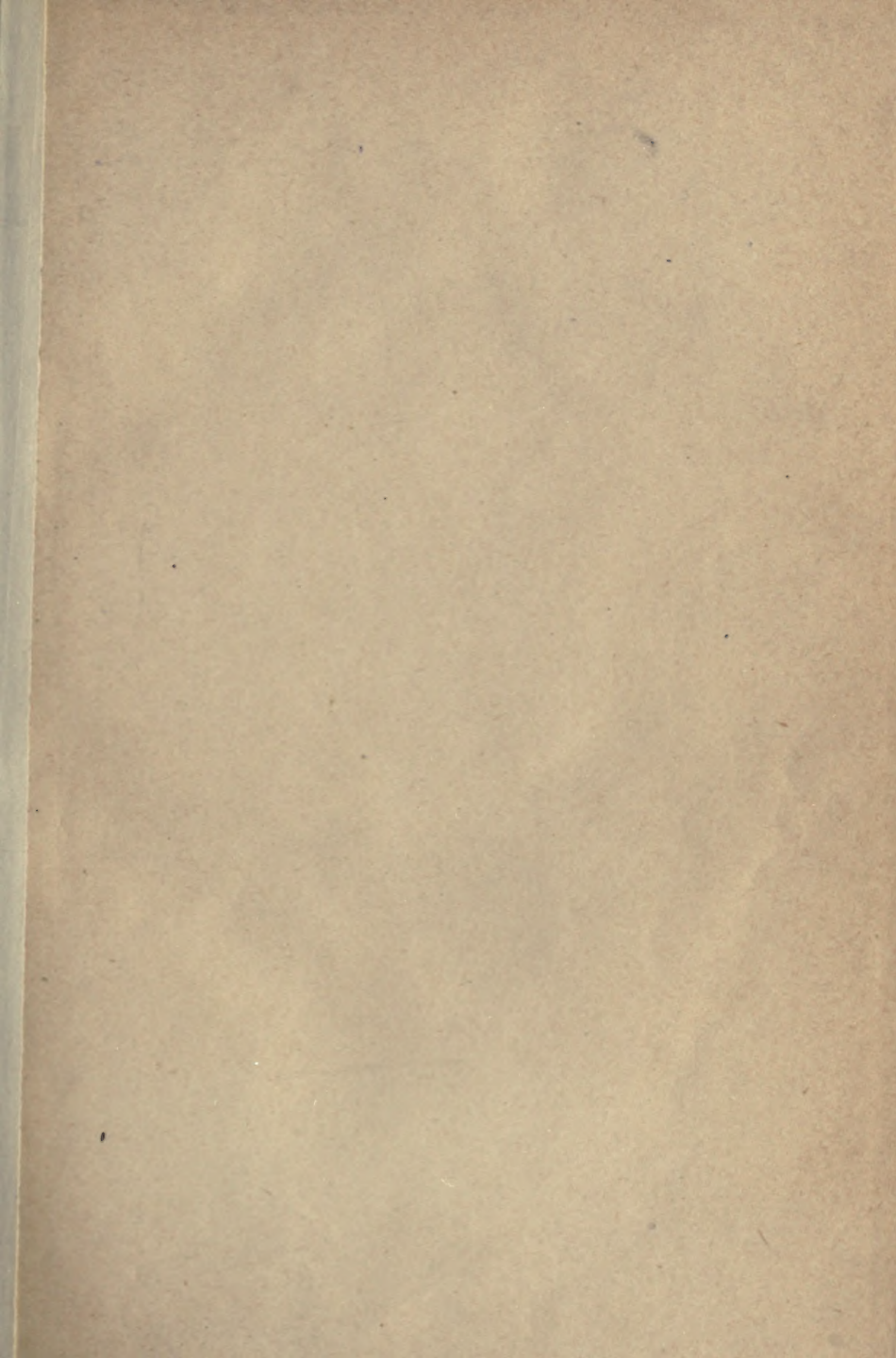
The Story of a Swiss Poet
Friedrich Schlegel's Life and Works


UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



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THE
STORY OF A SWISS POET

A STORY OF
DIFFERENCE WITH ONE
OF THE POETS

MARIE HAY

AUTHOR OF "A GERMAN FORTRESS"
"THE SWISS QUEEN", "MANAGETTES"
ETC.

BERNE
FERDINAND WYSS
1920



THE
STORY OF A SWISS POET

A STUDY OF
GOTTFRIED KELLER'S
LIFE AND WORKS

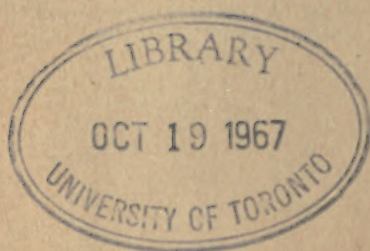
BY

MARIE HAY

AUTHOR OF "A GERMAN POMPADOUR"
"THE WINTER QUEEN", "MAS'ANIELLO"
etc.

BERNE
FERDINAND WYSS
1920

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TO
SWITZERLAND
THE LAND OF PITY AND OF HEALING
THIS BOOK IS DEDICATED
IN
LOVE AND GRATITUDE

It has always seemed to me that writers of studies on great authors presuppose in their readers so exhaustive a knowledge of the author's works, that the studies, however profound and brilliant, are often incomprehensible to the average reader. I have therefore endeavoured to give, not only an account of Gottfried Keller's life, but also a slight rendering of his books, in order that the reader, hitherto unfamiliar with his art, may gain a rapid view of each story. But I must make a request on my own behalf: that no one shall credit me with the presumption of rewriting or adapting Gottfried Keller. In all reverence, I have done my best not to disfigure his work, but to give an echo of his grand melodies.

Berne. 1919.

MARIE HAY.

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CHAPTER I.

Der Grüne Heinrich.

For English readers Gottfried Keller is by language on the enemy side, yet we need not plead for him against national prejudice, for he belongs to Switzerland, that dour and doughty mountain country, whose fair fame will stand for ever as the Land of Healing, where thousands of maimed and stricken men found health, sanity and hope.

Swiss literature has often been regarded as falling under the heading of the languages employed. We have been accustomed to class French Swiss writers among French authors, and the German Swiss writers we have considered as belonging to German literature. Obviously they have been influenced by the two languages, but there is a colour in Swiss writers' work which places it apart from German and French literature. Even Jean Jacques Rousseau and Madame de Staël are not French, but Swiss in mentality. Amiel too is unlatin in thought, and although he mastered German literature in his wide reading, his mind is not akin to the German spirit.

It is difficult to define the character of Swiss inspiration as differing from that of the two neighbouring nations — an accent, a tone, an atmosphere are things heard, acutely felt, but elusive, subtle. As near as it can be expressed, this Swissness consists in a sobriety, a certain sternness, a Huguenot plainness. Poetry is not lacking, nor sentiment, but there is a marked absence of ornamentation. There is a tendency to preaching and, most noticeably, a conscientious

emphasis on all that is democratic; and, save in the case of Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's chiselled work, a studied rejection of elegance. Keller repudiated the classification of Swiss literature apart from the main body of German literature, but the difference exists for all Meister Gottfried's objection. He himself is essentially Swiss. This does not imply a restriction in his knowledge of other literatures, for like all great writers, he was master of much and varied reading. Books were the bread of his mental life. How alike are the passages which tell of the Grüne Heinrich's omnivorous reading, and the pages where Jean Jacques confesses his mania for books. "*La tête me tournait de la lecture, je ne faisais plus que lire,*" Rousseau says; while Keller makes the Grüne Heinrich read some six-and-thirty volumes of Jean Paul in a month or two, and about fifty of Goethe's works in forty days.

Samuel Butler said that no one reads after the age of thirty-five and possibly he was right, for the hungry, feverish reading which belongs to youth is over, but then comes the reward: experience and a measure of understanding achieved, we have the time of pondering over books, the quiet hours of exquisite reverie, of recollection and comparison. Yet in sheer delight nothing can equal the rapture of the first passionate quest, the thrilling adventure thro' the wonderland of literature, enchanted haunts to him who has been born with that wealth of which no one can rob him: the love of books. We need no stately library with deep chairs and shaded light, no gilt-edged tomes or precious bindings of a Clovis Eve, tho' we too love these treasures and delight to turn the pages of some rare first edition. Who would not be a Maitre Grôlier if he could? And do we not dream of owning such books as his? But for a student a modern reading-room may be a sanctuary; and if it falls to our lot to study in the stillness of an old library, what better can we crave? Yet we are freemen of the books, not slaves of circumstance, a hawker's barrow may be our library, and a noisy street is magicked to a cloister's tranquillity while we read. What riches Jean

Jacques garnered from La Tribu's tattered volumes! What wealth Gottfried Keller found in the pedlar's pack, to carry off to the Zürich garret! And Harry Heine, what glowing world of romance did he not discover among those dusty volumes which his roving kinsman, the Ritter von dem Morgenlande, had left in the Düsseldorf attic? Here Heine read of Haluda ben Halevy, pored over the theories in black lore of old Agrippa von Nettersheim and pondered upon the sayings of Paracelsus.

How they loved books, these giants of literature! And how we love them and rejoice in tracing their journeyings thro' the books they read! Among them all, who is dearer to us than gruff and passionate Meister Gottfried Keller?

He was born in Zürich in July 1819. His father, by trade a turner, had passed his "Wanderjahre" in Germany. For six years Germany had shuddered under the heel of Napoleon. Scharnhorst was dead, but Gneisenau, Stein and Hardenberg were at work, and it was thro' a country of mental and material resurrection that Keller's father wandered. In June 1816 he returned to his native village of Glattfelden, a travelled gentleman, dressed in coat of green, those "grüne Röcke" which he affected till his death and out of which his thrifty widow fashioned those queer little coats which earned his son Gottfried his sobriquet at school, and which were destined to give the name to one of the world's famous books. He must have been a pretty fellow, this Johann Rudolf Keller; there is a portrait of him which helps us to understand why he won the heart of Jungfer Elisabeth Scheuchzer, the Glattfelden pastor's daughter. There was a certain social disparity between the lovers, but he spoke Hochdeutsch, wore fine linen, and those green coats of his were mighty becoming. During his wanderings too he had acquired some knowledge of drawing and architecture, and thus, when the young couple settled in Zürich in the Haus zum Goldenen Winkel, he appeared to be a cultivated citizen, not a humble master turner. It was in the Haus zum Goldenen Winkel that, legend says, in the age of the Minnesingers, lodged one Meister Johann Hadlaub, poet-

scribe of Zürich. And here, in 1819, was born Gottfried Keller — —

Gottfried von Strassburg war ein Liebesänger,
 Gottfried von Bouillon war ein Gottesstreiter,
 Gottfried von Zürich sei du — und so weiter
 Sei du für uns zwiefach ihr Doppelgänger.

Follen, the romantic poet, wrote these lines to Keller in after years.

Gottfried Keller was five years old when his father died. There is something dreamlike in those pages of the "Grüne Heinrich" where he tells of the tall man who held him in his arms and, taking a potato field in blossom as illustration, spoke to the child of the goodness of God Who gives beauty and plenty to mankind. Again, Keller depicts his father, martial and debonair, going off to a few weeks' military training. It is touched with that half regretful, legend-like charm which we know in our recollections of early childhood. We are not sure if we have read of it in some story book, whether a "grown up" has told it to us, or have we really lived it? We fall into a reverie over what we saw as little children — — it is like a well known landscape in a mist, strange and yet familiar to us.

Keller goes on to tell of his boyhood's days, and gradually the character of his mother takes shape, that strong, quiet woman, moderate in all things, shrewd, patient and thrifty. Despite the affection, possibly because of it, the conflict between the boy's stubborn, sensitive, introspective nature and his mother began early. In a passage rich with Keller's humour and his faculty for depicting a character by a distinctive trait, he describes his mother's cooking as "careful, correct and devoid of that exaggeration which delights the palate. Her soups lacked originality, they were neither thick nor thin; her coffee was not strong and not weak, in meats she used no grain of salt too much and never a pinch too little. She cooked straightforwardly, without style as the artists say. One could eat largely of her dishes without taking harm. As she stood before her kitchen fire, working with her capable hands, she seemed

an embodiment of the old adage: we eat to live, we do not live to eat! There was never too much food seldom too little."

In the midst of the recollections of his childhood, Keller breaks off to recount the piteous history of "Meretlein" the witch child. In about ten pages he has given the world one of the most haunting children's figures in literature. As a short story it is gem. Of course it is a moot point whether this breaking off in a narrative is not a grave fault in form. This is not a pedantic objection, but does it not ruin the continuity, is the interruption not irritating? Like all things in art, it is a question of taste, that potent but indefinable quality which belongs by right divine to the artist and can never be acquired. There is high authority for the interwoven short story, Goethe dared it, at considerable length too, in "Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre", where the "Bekenntnisse einer schönen Seele" usurp many pages. Both there and in the Meretlein story, the interruption occurs because of the influence of these episodes upon the development, in the main narrative, of the hero's mentality. The digression is only superficial. In any case, it is the quality of the interruption which matters. The Meretlein story is a legend which Keller heard and which he afterwards wrote as if taken from an old document.

Heine says no one has succeeded in telling the truth about himself, "not even St. Augustin nor Jean Jacques Rousseau." Yet we are only too pleased to accept Benvenuto Cellini's lies, and even if Catherine the Great never wrote a word of her piquant autobiography, we are grateful for the book! We may not have found veracious portraits, but we have gained vivid pictures such as a hundred serious histories could not have given us. We know that most biographers are liars too, whitewashers or calumniators whichever way their own souls are made, and we know well enough that the best portrait of an author lives in his works; but everybody has not the leisure to read a number of volumes in order to obtain their author's likeness. Hence the few great autobiographical novels will always be treasured, for even to the avid reader it is delectable to

grasp three books in one: an autobiography, a famed novel and an author's confession. After all, what does it matter if the actual facts are a trifle juggled? The portrait is what we seek. Thus the world will probably continue to see Gottfried Keller as "Der Grüne Heinrich" and the young Goethe as "Wilhelm Meister"; tho' in the latter instance, judging by Goethe's phenomenal amatory triumphs, he must have been more attractive than Wilhelm Meister, who was a sententious bore — even Philine grew impatient with him! But for Goethe we possess a delightful portrait: Lewis's Life, which, tho' superseded by innumerable Goethe studies in every language, remains the favorite biography, because it is in itself good literature.

Keller maintained that he had never intended the "Grüne Heinrich" to be a record of his life, and he was so annoyed by the supposition that he spoke of the book as "der grüne Esel". He had to admit however that the early chapters were taken from his boyhood, but he insisted that the later episodes were pure phantasy, and in especial that Anna and Judit were imaginary figures. Be this as it may, the narrative of "Der grüne Heinrich" is sufficiently close to the facts of Keller's youth to satisfy all save the devotees of literary curiosity, set on prying into the intimate details of an author's life. Let us keep sacred the mystery of personality! Familiarity breeds dulness as well as contempt. I do not want to see Shakespeare in his nightcap! It irks me to know that Schiller could not write without half a dozen rotting apples on his desk. Who dared to count de Quincey's pipes of opium? And if Goethe chose to be maudlin in his cups, that is his affair. Our business is with the souls they laid bare to the world in their books. I would see the flames, feel the heat of the fire. I do not want to analyse the composition of the coal in the furnace.

"Men's work we have," quoth one, "but we want them
Them, palpable to touch and clear to view!"

Is it so nothing, then, to have the gem,
But we must weep to have the setting too?" *

* Samuel Butler

Yet there are some stories in the lives of poets which illumine their works for us and these we treasure, but without prying, without indiscretion. To know that Bürger loved his wife's sister madly, dared all to win her and that death snatched her from him, as tho' the gods were jealous of such rapture, this is but to read his songs to "Molly" with added tenderness. To know of Goethe's passion for Frau von Stein and how the genius grew weary of a pretentious woman and suffered in his weariness, suffered and so abandoned her, is to see a little deeper into the soul of Goethe. To think of Alfieri as the lifelong lover of the Duchess of Albany, Charles Stuart's unhappy wife, is only to have the portrait in our minds of a human being, instead of remembering Alfieri as the author of frigid tragedies over which we have yawned perhaps more than we admit. To know of Charles Lamb's patient tending of an insane sister, can but make us love the "Essays of Elia" the deeper. When we vision Maître François Villon as a sorry vagabond, we marvel the more "*où sont les neiges d'antan?*" To understand how bitter was Balzac's disappointment when he married his dream princess of "*Les lettres à une inconnue,*" is no insolence of ours, but brings us a little nearer to a great genius. Who would not wish to know the story of Keats' short life, of his piteous love of Fanny Brawne? Spinoza becomes a figure in our minds when we see him as a lonely exile in the fogs and gloom of Amsterdam. We love to think of Mrs. Browning reading "The Sonnets from the Portuguese" to Browning, pretending they were written by someone else, because she longed to read them to him and yet feared the judgment of the man she loved "to the depth and breadth and height her soul could reach." They are denizens of our minds, these and many more, and we hold fair commune with them, but we would not pry and peep, not gloat over their hours of weakness, nor spy upon them.

Of Gottfried Keller's story the "Grüne Heinrich" tells us many things, let us take it at that, and rejoice that we have such a portrait of Keller in his youth. We see the

stubborn, pawky little fellow in his green coat attending the Zürich school and Keller even confesses his childhood's relation to God Almighty. I know of no more humorous yet pathetic reminiscence of the dawning idea of the Deity, save in Gosse's "Father and Son," a book which ranks with the great confessions or will assuredly be so ranked, when the contemporary dry wood and rubbish are cleared away from the mighty trees in the nineteenth century literary forest.

Very skilfully Keller touches in the portraits of those who played rôles in his childhood's drama and we grow interested in them for their own sakes, it is only afterwards, when the whole book has become ours, that we realise how they have reacted upon Heinrich Lee — upon Gottfried Keller. One of these is Frau Margret. Opposite the Haus zum Goldenen Winkel was a sombre old curiosity-shop, full of cast off clothes, old silks, bits of velvet, ancient carpets, rusty weapons, cracked and blackened pictures, antique furniture, broken crucifixes, household goods, battered copper pots and pans. How one longs to search thro' this enticing litter! What treasures may have been hidden in this curiosity-shop of a hundred years ago! At the back of the shop was an aging woman, who seldom moved away from the dark corner, but directed everything, bargained, ordered and carried on constant wordy warfare with Vater Jakoblein, her lazy, grumbling, crafty, old husband. She was dressed in a forgotten mode, and her snow white sleeves were folded in a fashion the Zürichers had never seen. She could hardly write and kept her accounts by mysterious chalk marks on a table, which no one else could understand, but she knew and kept strict count. The peasants from the whole countryside were her clients, to whom she lent money and trafficked in every kind of ware. In this way she had scraped together a goodly fortune and when the shop was closed for the night, she dispensed hospitality to a number of friends and hangers-on. And here, in the back parlour, before a crackling fire, the little "grüne Heinrich" sat close to Frau Margret and heard unusual talk. For Frau Margret's mind was alight with

curiosity concerning black magic, witchcraft, ghost stories and uncanny happenings. She was the friend and patron of young men, whom she helped with shrewd advice and even with generous gifts, and thus among her guests there were well dressed men, who, profiting by her wisdom and help, had risen to affluence. The parlour too was littered with old Bibles, works on black magic, tattered mythologies, superannuated maps, dusty tomes, treatises on herbs, accounts of ancient prophecies, books on alchemy, curious woodcuts. It was a magician's library. Keller lingers over the telling of these evenings. What a contrast between Frau Margret (whom her husband called a phantastic cow) and Gottfried's Calvinistic mother! Frau Margret's story only takes up some twenty-five pages of the "Grüne Heinrich", but she becomes a figure in our minds closely bound to Gottfried Keller.

In a way Heinrich's boyhood is not far different from what we see in the life of an ordinary schoolboy: he had his collections, his menagery, his self-made playthings. We hear of his troubles at school, his aping of soldier airs; his young swagger; his "Lügenzeit" his period of telling lies. Probably he was just as irritating to the outside world, just as cherished a cause of interest and anxiety to those who loved him, as any other boy; but it is all touched by the charm of genius to our seeing. We tremble for him when he is expelled from the Volksschule, we take his side against the hardly-trying teachers, we follow him in his first absorbing occupation with painting, we watch him copying the landscapes on the panels of the old stove and see him as he journeys on foot through the summer-crowned country. He tells us of the blue corn-flowers and the wealth of scarlet poppies, of the beauty of the clouds and how a half enjoyable sense of melancholy overcame him and he walked on weeping. We understand him in that phase of self-interest and overwhelming self-importance, that visualising of himself as a romantic figure, the phase which most young beings pass thro.' Then at his uncle's farm, he suffers the ordeal by mockery which the young inflict

on the young. When he exhibits his beloved copies of landscapes, he is teased and laughed at: "Herr Maler, guten Morgen! Herr Maler haben gut geruht?" Then he paints from nature and his real contact with art begins, in all its delight and manifold perplexity. There comes the day when his cousins take him to visit the schoolmaster and his daughter, Anna. She greets them at the door of the white house and he tells us: "She was slim and delicate as a young narcissus." One is reminded of the line in the *Odyssey* when, after Odysseus has told Nausicaa his eyes have never beheld such an one among mortals, he adds: "Yet in Delos once I saw as goodly thing: a young sapling of a palmtree springing up by the altar of Apollo."*

Heinrich talks with Anna's father about his expulsion from school and confides his hope of becoming a painter. The schoolmaster takes him seriously, speaking with him as man to man and the boy, feeling himself appreciated, gains confidence. The cousins laugh and chatter and it is only at the leave-taking that the incident occurs which is to influence Heinrich's future: Anna blushes as she gives him her hand; their fingers scarcely touch and they speak with the formal "you" instead of the friendly "thee and thou." This raises a gale of protest from the cousins, who declare that in the country such formality cannot be tolerated, they must call each other by their names! With prim timidity Heinrich and Anna murmur them and thus begins the love idyll, an episode so delicately sketched, so fresh, so divinely young that it seems the incarnation of spring. While the other love-story with Judit is the luxuriant, ample summer, delicious too, but feverish, passionate, sombre. Never in literature have the kisses of two women been more marvellously and subtly differentiated.

There is an account of Heinrich's grandmother's funeral, which reads like a page from Jeremias Gotthelf's great peasant stories. Heinrich and Anna are at the dancing which follows the funeral supper, then they steal away together

* Butcher's Prose Translation.

to lay a flower on the newly-made grave. It is here that Keller characterises Anna's first kiss. She whispers to Heinrich that he must not laugh at her and must promise not to betray her secret. "I asked her what?" Heinrich says, "and she answered she would give me the kiss she had refused me the other evening. I had already bent down to her and we kissed each other solemnly and awkwardly."

Shortly after this Anna is sent to Lausanne to finish her education. Heinrich returns to Zürich to study painting and the episode with his friend takes place. In three pages Keller gives us one of the soul dramas of youth: that often ridiculed and constantly misunderstood agony of disappointed friendship. Heinrich has a friend, a fellow student, whom he admires and loves with young and ardent devotion. The friend leaves Zürich and Heinrich pours out his soul to him in letters. The young man's replies are so rich in thought, so masterly in expression that Heinrich is humbled and yet proud that this wonderful being should deign to give him his friendship. Then one day a sentence in a book of Zimmermann's strikes him as curiously familiar, and soon afterwards he comes across a passage in Diderot's works which he has seen reproduced, word for word, in one of his friend's letters. His suspicion aroused, he searches through such books as he knows his friend possesses and finds that this beloved hero has copied pages of Jean Jacques, Sterne and Lessing. Furious at the deception he writes reproaching him, and this time the answers are no filched masterpieces, but angry recrimination. Each harsh letter calls forth a cruel reply and the fragile flower of friendship perishes in the tempest of anger. Heinrich still loves his friend, but he is brought face to face with one of life's most poignant ironies: that it is possible to love and hate at once, to admire, unreasonably, in utter bitterness, that which we despise.

Two years later Heinrich is once more at his uncle's farm and Anna has come back from Lausanne. When they meet again the barrier of awakened personality stands between them, they scarcely speak, even their eyes avoid each other,

and again the cousins by teasing force them together. How admirably Keller recounts incidents, harmless in themselves, yet agonizing to youth's self-conscious pride!

The day of the Tell Festival comes and Heinrich plays the part of Ulrich von Rudenz, Anna is Berta von Bruneck. They are no longer children, Heinrich Lee and Anna, and they play their lovers rôles self-consciously. At sunset he lifts her from her horse and they kiss hurriedly, almost casually, and walk on leading their horses through the wood to the river. Anna plucks a white flower and fastens it in his hat and then, for the third time, they kiss, this time not in childhood's innocence but with dawning passion. "I put my arms round her, pressed her violently to me and covered her face with kisses. At first she leaned against me, trembling but passive, then she threw her arms about my neck and answered my kisses; but soon she turned deathly pale and tried to free herself, while a change came over me too. Our kisses died out, I felt as tho' I held an unreal being in my arms. We gazed at each other with startled, questioning eyes. I still held her, but I dared neither to clasp her to me nor to release her, for, it seemed to me, I should let her fall into some unfathomable depth, yet that I should kill her if I held her longer. A great fear and sadness came over us. Abashed and oppressed we stood there. Then Anna moved away, sank down upon a rock near the river's brink and began to weep helplessly. Only now I felt I dared approach her again—freed from that weight of perplexity—from the icy cold which had overwhelmed me. I tried to take her hand while I whispered her name tremulously, but she hid her face in the folds of her cloak and wept on. At last she recovered somewhat and said brokenly: "Oh! we were so happy until now!" I half understood, for I too had felt something of the sort, only not so deeply as she, and thus I answered nothing. I sat down a short distance from her and we both gazed silently at the river."

Into this idyll comes another cousin of Heinrich Lee's, Judit, the figure in the book which remains tantalisingly mysterious. Heinrich had seen Judit occasionally during his first sojourn at his uncle's farm; she had teased him, romped

with him as tho' the fourteen year old boy had been a child, allowed him to pull down her heavy brown hair. This was his chief recollection of her, this and her healthy comeliness, but instinctively, when he returned to his uncle's house two years later, he refrained from seeking her out and she never came to the farm. As he and his cousins were on the way to that first visit to the schoolmaster's house, they had met Judit: "She stood beneath a fir-tree on a little hillock, her arms were folded. She held a rose firmly between her teeth and she greeted us shortly, but when I passed her, she nodded and smiled and it seemed to me there was something mocking in her smile."

The evening of the Tell Festival, when, after the love-scene by the lake, Anna has returned home, Heinrich roams about aimlessly and finds himself near a hostelry where the peasants are dancing and drinking. He enters, drinks with them and joins a roystering band which storms down the village street to another inn. Here the merriment is fast and furious. Heinrich strays into a further room and finds four men, gathered round a table, drinking and talking loudly. At the same table sits Judit. She leans carelessly back in her chair and laughingly parries the men's rough pleasantry, by turns leading them on, then rebuffing them with swift repartee. Heinrich joins the group and enters into the coarse banter, which soon develops into a heated political discussion. They call for more and more wine and the night grows old. At last Judit springs up: "Time for women and young boys to go home!" she declares, "Come with me, cousin, our roads are the same." The men say they will accompany Judit, but, half-drunken, they linger and she slips away. "We will soon get rid of these heroes!" she whispers to Heinrich. He follows her thro' several narrow lanes into the fields, while her admirers rush shouting after them, but Judit knows how to elude them and soon she and Heinrich are alone in the night. It is very dark, but he can distinguish dimly the full, firm figure and tho' he walks demurely beside her, her presence invades his consciousness overwhelmingly. She laughs about her discomfited admirers and then she begins teasing Heinrich about Anna. "When

you were a small boy, you were fond of me and I still love you a little, but now you have got a sweetheart to love and so you must not look at another woman." She takes his hand and draws him into a lane near her cottage. "Come in and I'll cook you some coffee," she says, and he answers nothing, for the blood is surging in him strangely. While the water is boiling she goes to take off her best gown and returns in a white petticoat and camisole, with bare arms and "out of the snowy linen her white neck and shoulders appeared dazzling white." She shows him some sketches he had given her two years since, childish scribbles indeed, but she tells him she has kept them carefully. They are looking at a sketch together, when she suddenly throws her arms round him, "You are always the same really! What are you thinking of now?" she demands. "I don't know" he answers. "Do you know that I could eat you with kisses when you look so thoughtful?" she whispers as she draws him closer to her.

"Why?" he says.

"I don't know myself," she answers.

The feverish scene continues, the more sensuous because of its restraint.

Their whispered love-making is interrupted by shouts beneath the window. Judit blows out the lamp. Her bibulous admirers call her loudly, and one of them clammers up the ivy on the house-wall and peers thro' the window. A flash of lightening blazes thro' the room and the climber announces that he sees "the witch sitting at her table." The room is dark again and Judit darts to her bed, snatches up the white coverlet, flings it over the chair by the table and, catching Heinrich to her, draws him down on the bed. Another flash illumines the room, and the watcher at the window calls out: "It is'nt the witch at all, but a white cloth over the chair!" A heavy shower of rain routs the besiegers, while Judit and Heinrich sit close together on the bed.

"When we no longer heard our tormentors we sat on quietly listening to the thunder and the driving rain. The house shuddered in the gale so that I could scarcely perceive my own trembling. I held Judit to me and kissed her on the

mouth and she kissed me warmly and freely. Then she disengaged herself from my arms and said: "Happiness is happiness, and there is only one happiness, but I cannot keep you here a moment longer if you won't confess that you and the schoolmaster's daughter love each other, for it is only falsehood which makes everything bad."

So he tells her his little love-story, but unconsciously, tho' he speaks of Anna, he describes his feelings for Judit.

"And what do you think you are doing here with me?" she demands.

He is bewildered and abashed. "You took me with you!" he answers sullenly.

"Yes," she says, "but would you have gone just the same with any handsome woman?"

"No, only with you!" he cries vehemently.

"Then you do love me a little?" she asks him. Heinrich is confronted with torturing perplexity, for he feels he cannot honestly answer "yes," and yet, he realises that a "no" would be equally untrue. At last he stammers out: "Yes—but not as I love Anna." He clasps Judit roughly to him and while he caresses her, he tries to explain: "See! for Anna I would bear everything, I would obey her in everything, I want to be a brave and honourable man for her sake, a man in whom everything is clear and clean as crystal! Never to do anything without thinking of her, and for ever and ever to live with her soul, even if from today I should never see her again! I could not do this for you, although I love you with all my heart, and if you ordered me to prove it by plunging a knife into my heart, I could do that now, quite quietly—and my blood would flow upon your knees!" Although he is startled at his own words, he knows he has expressed the feeling he has always subconsciously harboured for Judit. He strokes her cheek gently and feels a tear upon his hand. "What do I want with your blood?" she says, "Oh! no man has wished to be brave, honourable and true for me, no one has ever tried to be clear and clean as crystal for my sake, and yet I love the truth better than my life!" She endeavours to explain why she has lured him to her: she needed to kiss someone, she

longed to tame his pride, she wanted to love the man she had loved as a child. She kisses him again and again desperately, fiercely, till the boy is dizzy with passion. When he had kissed Anna it had seemed to him that his lips were caressing a flower—now he realises he is kissing a warm, passionate mouth.

Abruptly Judit asks him: "Are you thinking of your little sweetheart now?"

"Yes," he answers stoutly, "Yes, and I am going away from you!"

"Yes, go," she says laughing, and she lets her bare white arms fall away from him "in so strange a way that it is almost a physical pain to be thus suddenly freed from her embrace." She springs up, kisses him again violently, then pushes him away and cries out: "Now take yourself off, it is time you were home!" He turns away and she follows him, laughing at his rueful face. She opens her door: "Stop," she whispers, holding him back on the threshold, "stop and listen to me a moment. I never see a man in my house, do you hear? And you are the first I have kissed for a long time! I should like to be true to you—don't ask me why—but I must have something to try for in the long years! So I shall often make you come secretly to me in the night! In the day and before people, we'll do as if we hardly knew each other. You shall never regret it—that I promise you. Things don't go on in the world as one expects, perhaps with your Anna it won't be as you believe. Well, we'll see, but I tell you that later you may be glad enough to have been with me!"

"Never! I will never come to you again!" he cries.

"Hist! not so loud!" she whispers and then she looks at him and, in spite of the darkness, he sees how her eyes are flashing. "If you don't promise, promise sacredly and on your honour, that you will come back to me, I'll take you now, now into my bed. That I swear by God Almighty!"

Bewildered and frightened, he promises hastily and tears himself from her.

The dawn is breaking and, as he takes his way homewards, he sees from afar the schoolmaster's little white house. He flings himself on the ground and weeps bitterly.

It is very difficult in translation to give any adequate idea of the sombre force of this scene. Keller packs so much insinuation, so extraordinary an amount of psychology into his idiomatic German, that the medium of another language fails to give more than an indication of his meaning. After all, a translation is usually a plaster cast of a marble masterpiece. In German literature there is nothing to compare with the Judit love-scene. Perhaps one recollects that scene in "Wilhelm Meister" when the mysterious woman visits him in the night, but there is the difference of the intricate, calculated mystification of the eighteenth century plot and Keller's realism, although Judit remains a mysterious figure in spite of realistic writing. How unforgettable is the contrast between Judit and Anna as symbolised in their kisses! With what consummate skill Keller shews us his characters without describing them! He never tells us Judit is a woman with a passionate past and yet we know it instinctively, and he gives us the eternal tragedy of the too desirable woman in her vehement speech: "no man ever wanted to be brave, honourable and true for me, no one has ever tried to be clear and clean as crystal for my sake and yet I love truth better than my life." When Keller tells us what he chooses of Judit's past, in that meagre paragraph at the end of Chapter IV of volume II, we feel our curiosity the more whetted by the curt reference to her marriage to a vigorous, handsome fool; her irritation at the meanness of his character; her relief at his death. It is Judit who dominates in our memory of the women's characters in the "Grüne Heinrich," but Anna lingers with us too, and few readers have succeeded in forgetting the chapter which tells of Anna's death and of how Heinrich wrought her coffin on the river bank. Keller never wrote anything more tender, more direct in inspiration. His thought is always quick with life, yet he is fearlessly in touch with death, he never theorises, never essays to explain the inexplicable. He meets life and death with wide-eyed welcome always.

Anna dead, her gentle memory vanquishes the living Judit. There is another unforgettable scene where Heinrich bids Judit farewell: he, young and incapable of compromise,

solemn in the belief that he must remain unsullied as a tribute to his dead love; Judit, angry and vehement, yet offers herself to him unreservedly. It shall be as he wills; for as long as his love of her lasts; she cries out that she does not seek his respect, it is himself she wants. It is piteous to see this passionate, earth-bound spirit striving with the boy in his mood of ruthless purity, cloistered in his new knowledge of death. The dead girl wins, Heinrich repulses Judit and returns to the town.

We are given one more glimpse of Judit. Heinrich called in for his military training, is drilling with his comrades when a caravan passes. It is a party of emigrants to America and, among some women in a wagon, is Judit. Heinrich sees her eyes gazing sombrely at the company of recruits, then she recognises him and stretches out her arms in a gesture of yearning. At this moment the sergeant commands: "Right about!" and Heinrich, helpless fraction of the military machine, turns his back upon the caravan. When the recruits wheel round again, the wagon is far off down the dusty road. Judit has passed out of the Grüne Heinrich's life. At least such is the story in the first version of the book; we shall see the changed working in the final rendering.

Heinrich prepares to start on his Wanderjahr. He packs his few possessions in an old wooden kist. A strange hoard—and one wonders if many of the heavy boxes which were laboriously transported by the mail-coaches, contained such heterogeneous collections! Besides his scanty wardrobe, Heinrich carried a bundle of his sketches, his flute and Albertus Zwiehan's skull! Cavillers will object that this gruesome object is introduced in the final version in order to allow Meister Gottfried the pleasure of interweaving an account of Albertus Zwiehan, which of itself is a separate story and has no bearing on Heinrich Lee's mental development; and that, like much that is pressed into the book, it belongs by rights to a collection of short stories in Keller's later manner. It is curious that this rather tedious digression was added by Meister Gottfried when he reworked the book.

Now comes the record of Heinrich's experiences as a painter in Munich. The figures of his brother artists stand out: Erikson,

"le peintre malgré lui" and Ferdinand Lys, a painter of symbolical pictures which he never sells, even hides from the outside world, only permitting his few intimates to see these revelations of his thought. We follow Heinrich through a minutely described pageant, wherein Keller indulges his taste for ancient costume. To be honest, these lengthy descriptions are a little wearisome. Then comes the artists' feast after the procession, where the participants are again in fancy dress, and Keller describes each costume elaborately. Among the revellers we meet Rosalie the wealthy widow, and the rather sordid figure of Agnes, for whom the Grüne Heinrich fights a duel with his friend Lys. The scene where Lys challenges Heinrich is full of youthful fire and naïve inconsequence. Heinrich tells him that his behaviour to Agnes springs from his atheism, that the godless are always heartless. This enrages Lys even more than Heinrich's remarks about Agnes and he challenges him to fight. The duel in the name of a woman is in truth fought in defence of belief in the existence of God! As usual, Keller does not insist or expatiate, he simply depicts, and it is left to the reader to perceive the psychology beneath the events, even beneath the reflections Keller's characters express. It is only in a short sentence that he gives us the soul of the matter. In describing the duel he writes: "*God, for whom we were fighting*, God alone knows how such amicable fencers came into so deadly a contest." We must read Keller's work with minute attention, for if we miss a single sentence the depth and subtlety of an entire scene may go past us.

Heinrich struggles on in Munich, his pictures are rejected by the dealers and, at length, his slender resources are exhausted. The day comes when he has not a groschen in his pocket and there is no prospect of receiving help from his mother.

For three days, Heinrich has eaten nothing, he is weak with hunger and his natural optimism, his careless belief in life fail him. Then he recollects his mother's faith in prayer. With mingled curiosity and hope he shuts his eyes and prays God to rescue him from his dilemma. When he opens his eyes he sees something glittering in a dusty corner of his room,

a sunray has touched the metal keyboard of his flute—that long-forgotten friend. Here is a direct answer to his prayer, for he can sell the flute and buy food. He sets off in search of a buyer and chances on a second-hand shop whose owner receives him kindly. He bids Heinrich play him a tune in order to prove the flute's value. Trembling with weakness and hunger, Heinrich begins to play a melody from Weber's *Freischütz* which he has often played in happier days at home. The memory unmans him and he breaks off with tears in his eyes. He turns away to hide his emotion and his glance meets the gaze of a young girl who is looking thro' the shop window. This lady enters and talks to the dealer, while Heinrich, numbed to indifference by hunger, leans against an old packing case and waits till the lady, her buying concluded, departs. He sells his flute and this bargain is the commencement of a measure of prosperity for him. Gradually he sells all his books; then his sketches and pictures go to the dealer, who takes a fancy to his client and the meagre purchase money is often increased by the bestowal of a square meal of the old fellow's cooking. For months this precarious livelihood continues and Heinrich dreams thro' the days, content to live and think. His curiosity is aroused concerning the purchasers of his pictures, but the dealer refuses to enlighten him. At length Heinrich's hoard of sketches is exhausted and he is again faced by the spectre of hunger. The dealer gives him work. He sets him to paint flag-staffs in the cellar beneath the shop. The heir to the Bavarian throne is to enter Munich in state and these flags will be needed by the faithful burghers for window decorations. Heinrich learns the joy of manual labour, he feels himself in touch with the labouring masses. Keller's Swiss pride in all that is democratic comes out here, though he was far too intrinsically an artist to have relished the application of his theories to himself. For he who loves solitude (and the artist, and more especially the writer not only loves, but absolutely needs solitude) can never enjoy the turmoil of a crowd, be it proletarian or aristocratic. Nevertheless Keller apparently delights in sending the Grüne Heinrich among noisy crowds.

Heinrich feels secure with his well-earned gains; he is now a worker among workers, and he rejoices with the workers, he makes love to a working girl whom he meets in a beer-garden. In the second version, old Meister Gottfried amplified these scenes, which young Keller, in the first version, had not cared to relate. The halo of memory had made this episode fair to the gruff old writer.

Heinrich plans to return to his mother. He has fallen in with a compatriot who tells him his mother almost starves, eking out her daily needs upon the smallest sum in order to save something to send him. For several nights Heinrich is pursued by a dream, it fills many pages both of the first and second version. It is one of the few dreams in literature which is really dreamlike: threatening, phantastic, incoherent, symbolical too if you mean to take it so. The telling of this dream is an achievement even for a writer as powerful as Gottfried Keller. The dream decides Heinrich to start for home. His lodging-house keeper, to whom he has left his box and a few belongings in lieu of rent, flings Albertus Zwiehan's skull down the stairs after him. The tyranny of an ill-filled purse forces him to travel on foot, but he goes off blithely with his cherished Albertus in his knapsack. He tramps along the highroad and towards evening comes to a forest. In a few lines we have a delightful description of the Bavarian landscape. We see the tall beech trees with their carpet of last year's leaves like burnished copper in the sunlight; we smell the fragrance of the fir wood, we watch the young larches and the little birch trees whispering and swaying in the breeze; and our eyes gaze over the grand sweep of broad fields with the little villages and their red-brown roofs—and the distant blue of the hill-lands.

Heinrich has an adventure. It is raining in torrents and he has ensconced himself in a sheltered spot, when he sees an old peasant woman dragging a small, withered birch tree along the forest path. A forester appears and bellows at the old woman accusing her of stealing wood. In vain she pleads that she has found the birch lying broken on the road. The man seizes her by the ear and is dragging her away, when Heinrich

lets out a hollow groan and setting Albertus Zwiehan's skull on his stick shakes it up and down between the overhanging branches. The forester, thinking he is confronted by death itself, flies in terror, leaving the old wife in possession of her fire wood.

Towards dusk of this rainy day, Heinrich's wanderings bring him to a little church. The doors are open and Heinrich, wet to the skin, cold, hungry and weary, seeks the welcome shelter. He finds a resting-place in the confessional and is just settling himself to sleep, when a heavy hand falls on his shoulder. It is the verger who demands harshly if he means to spend the night in the church. Heinrich implores him to grant him at least an hour's rest: "God's Mother will not blame you for it," he says. It may seem strange that the Zürich Calvinist should plead in the name of the Blessed Virgin, but all Protestantism's gaunt negation of beauty has not succeeded in uprooting the flower of Madonna-love from the hearts of poets, and Keller, one of the greatest portraitists of women in literature, has not failed to draw for us the portrait of that most wonderful of history's women, Mary Mother. We shall see in the "Sieben Legenden" that he is capable of giving us the spirit of the Mary legend. It was his indeed as he sings in "Tod und Dichter":

"Süsse Frauenbilder zu erfinden
Wie die bittre Erde sie nicht hegt."

To return to Heinrich: the verger is adamant and Heinrich leaves the church. He sinks down upon a seat which stands in the midst of the graves. The verger follows and apostrophises him saying he must leave the churchyard immediately, it belongs more or less to the castle gardens: "Out with you!" A tall young woman appears from the shadow of the trees beyond the churchyard and stands listening to the verger upbraiding Heinrich. Then she comes forward and asks Heinrich curiously: "Do you want to sleep here really? Do you love the dead so much?" He answers he had thought the dead would not persecute the weary, but he sees that here they are almost as merciless as the living. She tells him

that if he will explain his business, he shall not find the living cruel. He says he is no vagabond, but a Swiss artist, journeying to his native land, and that the rain has hindered him on his road. "Do you think I am a Bardolph and shall be hung for stealing the church's jewelled monstrance?" he demands indignantly. To her thinking no vagabond quotes Shakespeare, and to know King Henry V so thoroughly as to remember brawling Master Bardolph, argues a minute knowledge of the historical plays. So she caps his quotation, asks him his name and invites him to follow her to the garden-house. She gives him food and wine and, while he eats, she talks and laughs with the maid she has summoned to help her to arrange the vases for the decoration of the graves. Heinrich dreamily watches the girls filling the vases with flowers and steadying the roses with rounds of paper to prevent them from drooping. He is aroused by an exclamation from the lady. Seeking a piece of cardboard for these flower-holders, she has opened a portfolio of sketches and has come upon the name: "Heinrich Lee" signed upon them. She questions Heinrich and as he answers her, it dawns on him too that she is the lady he had seen at the second-hand dealer's shop. He snatches up the portfolio and finds his sketches there. We might turn away from an ordinary writer's work, complaining that the long arm of coincidence is strained almost out of joint, but Gottfried Keller has the knack of making his plots seem natural. We are surprised, interested, seldom irritated, although we feel our minds are as much his puppets as the figures he moves at will upon the stage of his fancy. And yet this episode of Dortchen Schönfund and her foster-father, Count Dietrich von W—berg, is as artificial a "plot story" as anything we have smiled at in romantic literature. Heinrich is taken into the Count's household, he is to paint a picture for the Count and he must superintend the framing of the Munich sketches. The Count, a typical aristocratic dilettante and patron of arts, loads him with favours. The life at the castle is carefully described, but one feels that Keller, unerring portraitist of the environment he knows, is here depicting a milieu which is alien to him; and the Count and his

household are lay figures bolstered up to play their parts by the writer, not beings to whom the poet's travail has given life. Dortchen Schönfund, the lady who rescued Heinrich from the verger's clutches, is the Count's adopted daughter. Obviously, Heinrich falls in love with her and when he hears she is no high-born damsel, but a foundling to whom the Count has assigned the name of Dortchen Schönfund, his hopes soar to marriage. Skilfully Keller gives us the psychology of the timid man who dares not grasp happiness, altho' it is within his reach. Keller takes his readers into his confidence, showing by many subtle touches that Dortchen is nigh to loving Heinrich Lee; but Heinrich himself is blinded by timidity. The days pass and still he fails to speak. Keller gives us two finely drawn portraits: the religious crank, Gilgus and the Count's chaplain, a scholar, a gourmand and something and of a bore.

Few things are more attractive than to read of books in the course of a narrative, and the talk between the Count and his guests on Angelus Silesius' "Cherubinische Wandersmann" is delightful. This seventeenth century mystic's writings had been reëdited by Varnhagen von Ense in 1820 and in 1853 Hoffmann von Fallersleben had written about him. Thus, when Keller was struggling to finish der "Grüne Heinrich," old Angelus was a favourite theme in the talk of those who loved books. The Count, his chaplain and Heinrich Lee discuss Angelus' dedication of his book to no less a patron than God Almighty. It is in the same style as the fulsome dedications to earthly sovereigns or noble lords in former centuries. Dortchen Schönfund, who has been turning over the leaves of the book, interrupts the discussion by exclaiming: "See, here is the fairest spring-song I have ever read!" She goes to the pianoforte and setting Angelus' words to the melody of an ancient choral, sings:

"Blüh auf, gefrorner Christ!
Der Mai ist vor der Tür,
Du bleibest ewig tot,
Blühst Du nicht jetzt und hier" —

Her voice is vibrant with earthly love, but Heinrich, as usual, fails to understand. One cannot wonder that Gottfried Keller, who in these scenes doubtless drew his own character, went to his grave without gaining what he so piteously sought: the love of woman.

After some time in the castle, Heinrich decides to continue his journey. Dortchen has given him chance after chance of speaking his heart's yearning, she has dubbed him the "gefrome Christ" (frozen Christian) alluding to the song, but nothing enlightens this impossible lover, and he leaves the castle without declaring himself.

Heinrich and the Count journey to Munich. They find that the second-hand dealer has died, leaving Heinrich a substantial legacy. The Count causes Heinrich's pictures to be exhibited, they fetch high prices and Heinrich starts once more for Switzerland, this time as an affluent traveller. It is all very comfortable, rather smug and commonplace. We turn the pages lazily, the Grüne Heinrich, artist, has become Heinrich Lee, successful burgher. But Meister Gottfried has not done with his hero though he has brought him back to Switzerland. Keller, the dawdler, makes his prototype linger on the homeward way and when at length Heinrich reaches Zürich, he finds his mother dying. Once more the book becomes poignant. Keller is in his own milieu. The artificial episode is ended and the inexorable realist is at work again. Very tenderly he describes the mother's death, tenderly and powerfully, there is never a hint of deathbed pathos, of sentimentality or artificiality before the most absolute of all realities: Death.

Heinrich makes up that hesitating mind of his to a time of serious study. After ten months he writes to the Count. Keller specifies the time according to his habit without comment; it is his task to describe, to portray; it is his reader's business to comment and recognise character. The touch of artificiality reappears in the Count's answer. Dortchen Schönfund, the foundling, has now turned out to be the daughter of the Count's reprobate brother, who had disappeared years ago. Dortchen is a Countess and heir to the great estates, also

she is happily affianced (of course to a Baron). The Count tells Heinrich he had been aware of his love for Dortchen, and had he not been so marvellously dilatory, doubtless she would long since have been his wife. With this cold comfort Heinrich is left to his reflections and they are sufficiently bitter. His lingering at the castle has cost him a heavy price: he has missed his mother's last hours and, the Count's mocking speeches having shattered his faith in God, he has lost his belief and his hope of seeing his mother in the Hereafter. Bitter enough, no doubt, but Heinrich had not put himself out over much to see the poor woman, while she was on earth. And yet herein, as usual, Keller's perception of the human heart's inconsistency is unerring, he shows us Heinrich bowed down with regret and remorse.

In the last chapter, Heinrich Lee has become a government official, Oberamtmann in the neighbourhood where his youth was spent. He is a lonely taciturn man. One evening he is returning from the inspection of an outlying portion of his district. He saunters along and finds himself in the woods near the house where his uncle lived years ago and where the first acts of his own history had played. It is striking how vividly Keller makes us feel Heinrich's loneliness, although he merely presents him to our vision, never condescends to description. Heinrich is wandering on, his heart heavy with memory, when he catches sight of a woman moving slowly down a pathway in the wood. Dreamily he watches her, the setting sun has magicked the woodland to golden unreality—and he thinks the grey figure is like a forest spirit. There is something familiar in her gait, something that stirs his memory. He follows, and when the woman turns and faces him, he recognises her, altho' for an instant he is not sure—"Experience and knowledge of humanity had changed her eyes and lips, and yet there was the old true-hearted glance, the gaze of the child of nature."

"Judit!"

For a moment they stand silently hand in hand. "Is it you indeed?" she says. He asks her whence she comes and she tells him she has returned, a fortnight since, from America.

She has prospered. She had bought land in America, farmed it and doubled the small capital she had taken from home; then some one had told her Heinrich Lee had fallen on evil days, was lonely and poor, and she had sold everything and come back to seek him. But, when she reached home, she learned he was in easy circumstances and a respected official, a Herr Amtmann. And so she had lingered on at a neighbouring village, deeming he could have no need of her.

Sadly he tells her the story of the years, how he failed his mother, how he missed everything in his life. Suddenly he breaks off: "Judit! you have delivered me! I am yours till life ends!" he says.

There are several fine scenes between Heinrich and Judit. Youth and passion are overpassed, but Judit's patient tenderness, her abiding sense of "belonging together" with the one man she has deeply loved in her life, that life which we guess to have been passion-tossed, is brought out with great skill. Judit refuses to marry Heinrich, he is to remain free, but she will always be there for him. For twenty years they lead this uneventful life—whither he goes she follows, living near him, a faithful woman, asking nothing of him, only loving him to the "level of every day's most quiet need." She dies while nursing the poor during an epidemic. "She might have lived another twenty years to be my joy and comfort," is the epitaph which Heinrich's selfish regret speaks over her, and yet, perhaps, it is the fairest tribute a man can offer in payment of a woman's faithful love.

"Der Grüne Heinrich" is a great book, it is one of the world's classics and yet it is badly composed or rather not composed at all, it wanders on like life itself. Here we have a proof that not even the masters of written realism can defy the eternal limitation of art. Literature may come close to life, but it is not life, it is art. Struggle as we will against this it is an inexorable truth, and the realist must finally acknowledge that he cannot capture more than an echo of the world—an artificial thing though burningly alive if the author has written with that mysterious power which is composite of his heart's blood, his brain's effort and his faithful patience.

Form is necessary to the materialisation of literary vision, without form the writer's achievement remains a series of gestures, indicating this or that, possibly in strength and beauty, but not clearly, not steadily. Such books are like pages from a painter's portfolio: thumbnail portraits, a head, a hand, a flower, a branch, a sketch of a ruined house—but never a complete picture for the beholder to treasure in his memory. In the "Grüne Heinrich" we are reminded of the adage: "*qui trop embrasse, mal étreint.*" It is this over-reaching, this formlessness which makes "Der Grüne Heinrich" wearying to read in spite of its many beauties. We must read and reread it if we would appreciate it. Of course, the quiet art of reading is indispensable for the true appreciation of the arduous art of writing, but "Der Grüne Heinrich" demands too much actual study; we sometimes feel Keller has not borne his full share of the task.

The first and second volumes are almost identical in matter in both versions, but the form differs. In the early version there are four preliminary chapters in the third person singular, these Keller struck out of the final version. In Version I the narrative in the first person singular is altered after Chapter III of Volume III to the third person singular. This gives the book a patchy and uneven surface and Keller's final alteration to the first person singular all through, is an improvement. There are many transpositions of words and phrases in Version II, many sentences are revised or omitted. There is one Judit scene in the first version which in the second version Meister Gottfried suppressed. He is telling of Heinrich's nightly visits to Judit, Anna is dying and his thoughts are constantly with her, he seldom leaves her during the day, but at night youth and passion send him hasting to Judit, although he is not physically her lover. They loiter in the woods, she teases him, tempts him, lifting her skirts so high when she jumps over a ditch that the boy is bewildered, half fearful, half sensually curious. One night he tells her the episode of his childhood, when the theatrical company came to the town. Goethe's *Faust* was acted and Heinrich had been chosen to play the rôle of one of the monkeys in the

Witch's Kitchen. After the representation, he had hidden among the scenery and had fallen asleep. When he awoke, he found the empty theatre unlit, save for the wan moonlight athwart the windows. Child tho' he was, he was not afraid and had played about among the theatrical properties. He had clambered into the orchestra and seizing a drumstick had beaten a tattoo upon the big drum. Then fear had come over him and he had cowered down against the wall. A white figure had emerged from the darkness at the back of the stage. He had been terrified, but some irresistible force had drawn him towards that white figure which he had believed to be the ghost of Margarethe, whom he had seen die in the dungeon two hours since. He was still in the monkey's costume and when he stood before the ghost, she had apparently been little less alarmed than he! Then she had laughed and questioned him, and he had confessed it was he who had beaten the tattoo which had aroused her. Recognising the actress who had played Margarethe, his fear of the supernatural had changed to timidity before a beautiful living woman. She had taken him to sleep at the foot of her bed and they had passed the night innocently together. But he had seen her bosom, bare and white, in the moonlight and now, he confesses to Judit, that ever since, when the moon shines, he remembers that breast of a woman for whom he sometimes yearns, although he has forgotten even her name! "We were just going along the river's bank, when I told her this. The moon cast a network of light and shade over the water. Judit suddenly disappeared from my side. She glided away into the wood, while I went on along the bank. For some five minutes, there was no sound save the sigh of the wind in the trees and the rippling of the water. It seemed to me as though Judit had dissolved into the heart of nature and that her being spoke to me in these gentle sounds. I came to the cliffs which overhung the deeper water. The moonlight fell upon the trees which grew upon these cliffs and they seemed to reach up into the night-sky. The water at my feet was moonlit too. On the stones near the bank lay a little heap of garments, on the top was a chemise which, when I touched it, I felt was still warm, as tho' it had

been a mortal frame whence the living soul had but just escaped. I listened, but there came no sound and I could not see Judit. An eerie feeling crept over me, the night was full of haunting witchery. I was on the point of calling loudly when I heard a faint tone, half sigh, half whispered melody. As it grew more distinct, I recognised the lilt of an old song. I had heard it often before, yet now it seemed laden with mysterious meaning. It spoke of the depth of waters, it told of love, but somehow I felt it was tinged with mockery. It was accompanied by a gentle rippling as tho' someone was moving softly in the water. All at once, in the shadow of the overhanging bushes on the opposite bank, I saw dimly a white figure which appeared to be now floating, now standing motionless in the water. There was a narrow dyke leading from one bank to the other, and as I stood, bewildered and breathless, I saw Judit approaching me over this submerged stoneway. She was quite naked. She came towards me in a circle, and I, as though magnetized, followed her every movement. She reached the shallow water,—she was now in the full moonlight—she gained the bank and stepped up out of the river, the water falling away from her thighs—from her knees. She set her white feet upon the dry land only a few paces away from me. Our eyes met. I could see each limb of her quite plainly, yet I thought she had grown into a giant figure of beauty, like some marble statue of a goddess. Drops of water shimmered on her shoulders—on her breast—on her hips— She gazed at me and her eyes gleamed. She lifted her arms and came closer to me, but, assailed by a sense of awe, I moved backwards like a crab, one step away to each of her forward steps. Thus I retreated till I was hidden by the shadow beneath the trees, while she stood in the moonlight. I leaned my head against a tree-trunk and stared at this marvellous apparition.

Now it seemed that a feeling of shame came over her, for snatching up her clothes, she began dressing in feverish haste. Forgetting my own anguish, I went to her and, with trembling fingers tried to assist her in fastening her skirt, and I laid her white scarf across her breast. Then I threw my arms about her and kissed her lips. I did it because I knew

she felt humiliated and I longed to help her. Her face was glowing, the painful blush had even spread over her breast. She crushed her stockings into her pocket and hurriedly slipped her bare feet into her shoes. Then she caught me to her, kissed me wildly—violently, and fled away into the night. I turned upon my homeward way. I took the whole blame of the passionate adventure upon myself, although in truth I had only suffered, but I knew how that moonlit figure would haunt my senses for ever, torturing my brain and my blood like a consuming flame."

Evidently old Meister Gottfried deemed it a profanation thus to show Judit naked to a world of readers, when he intended to bring her back at the end of the book; whereas young Gottfried Keller, meaning to despatch Judit definitely to America (Version I) did not hesitate to give us this sensuous scene. It is an interesting example of the reticence which life teaches even genius. Alas! is wisdom better than youth? Who shall say? Is it wisdom that writes great books or is it youth's ardent fancy? The American poet, Edgar Lee Masters says:

"In youth my wings were strong and tireless,
But I did not know the mountains.
In age I knew the mountains,
But my weary wings could not follow my vision—
Genius is wisdom and youth."

In this case old age erased youth's writing, but Keller dowered with a treasure which is rare among germanic authors: taste, was probably right in suppressing the bathing scene, although we cannot refrain from regret at the loss of such a beautiful thing.

In the first version, the duel with Ferdinand Lys is amplified in importance. When Heinrich is mourning for his mother he receives a letter from Lys telling him he is dying from the effects of his wound. This letter, added to his remorse at having missed his mother's last hours, throws Heinrich into profound melancholy. At length he writes Dortchen Schönfund the long delayed declaration of his love, but before he has had

time to receive an answer, he incontinently falls ill and dies. The end of the first version is curiously abrupt, the reader feels Keller's weariness of his subject, his desire to be done with "Der Grüne Heinrich!" He writes in one of his letters that he scrawled the last pages literally in tears," and certainly his haste and impatience are evident enough.

CHAPTER II.

Keller's youth. Heidelberg. Berlin. Rahel and Heine. Zürich. The People of Seldwyla. Pankraz der Schmoller.

WE may take the first and second volumes of "Der Grüne Heinrich" as Keller's own story tho' the actual events may not tally exactly; yet the first portion of the book gives us a picture of Gottfried Keller as a youth, such as no biography could achieve. The Munich episodes of Vol. III undoubtedly describe his artist's years. But the last volume is fiction and tho' we read it with interest as completing the picture of Heinrich Lee, we must remember that it does not represent Gottfried Keller's life. Even the beautiful pages which recount his mother's death are fiction, for Frau Keller lived to read her son's book and was touched and surprised by the revelation of his tenderness for her. Keller's volume of poems (love songs and political verses published 1846) obtained him a grant from the Swiss State of 800 francs a year to enable him to travel and study. The donors, with the perspicacity of officials, intended Keller to study the Orient. It is humorous to reflect what mongrel offspring the Swiss genius would have begotten from an oriental muse! Fortunately, Keller overruled the Zürich magnates, and in 1848 betook himself to Heidelberg. The preceding six years he had spent with his mother and sister Regula in Zürich, and it was then that he had finally renounced the painter's career. His pictures were mediocre landscapes and sorrowfully he realised he had mistaken his vocation. But his soul was full of poetry and during these six years he wrote many poems besides the first published book of verse, which brought him immediate recognition both

in Switzerland and in Germany. In 1847, he met Luise Rieter, a native of Winterthur, who was staying at a friend's house in Zürich. He fell in love with her. "Der Grüne Heinrich" shows us how Keller loved, and in "Pankraz der Schmoller" we have another description of his shy, surly way of wooing. Luise Rieter did not return his passion, she liked him well enough, this silent little man with the big head and the vivid dark eyes, but she did not love him. It was ever to be the same story in Gottfried Keller's life, and yet Woman—not women—meant so much to him always. There is a sentence in a letter of his which shows how delicate was his conception of love, how it was not woman's physical being which he desired but tenderness he yearned for, he writes: "It is chiefly the tone of the voice which means all to me in a woman. By that I recognise immediately a beautiful and good woman's heart. Fräulein Rieter's voice has this tone, a tone which fills me with longing."

Keller was profoundly unhappy when he travelled to Heidelberg, and the "Grüne Heinrich" was already overshadowed in his mind by his ill-fated ambition to write drama. At Heidelberg he fell in with a group of scholars, professors and philosophers. Chief among these was Ludwig Feuerbach, the philosopher, son of that celebrated authority on Criminal Law, Anselm Feuerbach, in whose house at Ansbach the mysterious foundling, Kaspar Hauser, had enjoyed the only kindly treatment which fell to his lot during his short life. Ludwig Feuerbach's philosophy, his fearless thought and wide historical knowledge, made a deep impression upon Keller, whose eager mind was turning from the stern dogmas of Calvin. But he was not destined to be swept into philosophic studies, love came to his mental rescue. Living near Heidelberg was Christian Kapp, Professor of Philosophy who, having quarrelled with his university colleagues, had retired to a country-house and occupied his leisure with mineralogical studies, botany and occasional excursions into political life, where he supported the republican cause. He had a handsome daughter who painted and wrote verses. Luise Rieter was forgotten, philosophy and politics faded in the poet's mind,

Gottfried Keller loved again and it was summer—summer in the Heidelberg woods—summer in those neglected gardens of the old castle where Elisabeth Stuart had wandered long ago! Johanna Kapp confided in Keller and read him her poems. He mistook comradeship for love, and poured out his heart to her in a letter. Many years after, when he died, her answer was found among his papers. It is kind and affectionate, but she tells him frankly that she loves—Ludwig Feuerbach, a married man. Poor Gottfried Keller! Most women liked him, none loved him. He took his defeat bravely and the rambles through the autumn woods were resumed. Then, when winter came, Johanna left Heidelberg to study painting in Munich and he never saw her again. For seven years, they wrote to each other regularly, he the lover, she the friend. It is regrettable that none of his letters to her exist, Johanna burnt all she had and only one letter, which he never sent to her, was found among his papers. In 1856, the correspondence ceased abruptly, why, we shall probably never know, but there is a bitter sentence in a letter of Keller's to Hettner, which shows that something Johanna had done or written had wounded him to the quick and killed, not only love, but even kindness: "Ordinary coquettes, when they are pretty, one can make allowance for," he writes, "but when a coquette is like Johanna and wants to be extraordinary and have a great destiny as well, such wretched practices deserve only rough answers!" He did not know, when he wrote thus harshly, that Johanna's extravagances were a sign of a deranged intellect. Soon after the unhappy woman went mad, and she was insane till her death in 1885.

The year 1850 saw Keller in Berlin. He intended to stay there twelve months, and he lingered on six years. He called Berlin his prison, his house of correction, his penitentiary. He hated the town, he disliked the people, he was fierce and bitter and unhappy. He had letters of introduction which were to open the gates of friendly intercourse for him, but at first he would not deliver them. Like many timid beings he sulked out of sheer mistrust of himself and condemned humanity because he was oppressed by his own shyness, his awkwardness,

his squat figure, his big head, his shabby clothes. His friend Hettner had given him an introduction to Fanny Lewald, the novelist. Grumbling and suspicious, he went to visit her. She was away from home. Doubtless she would not wish to see him, he would not go to her when she returned! And as she had not seen him, surely Varnhagen von Ense, to whom he also had an introduction, would not wish his acquaintance either. There is nothing on earth so illogical as a literary genius when his super-sensitive nature is in arms against an imaginary affront. The brain which has the faculty of creating in words, has perforce the habit of building a psychological structure, of visualising imaginary scenes and situations which may be figments of his fancy, reared by his habitual, altho' sub-conscious, mental processes, resulting often in something beyond the control of his will. This is a necessary component of an author's mentality, indispensable for his work, and it is impossible for this trained activity of his mind to remain passive in every day life, although it is then involuntarily exercised. It is a source of infinite suffering to the writer, a constant cause of annoyance to his friends, it is the initial reason of many tragic misunderstandings; but it is unavoidable, it is an integrant of that potent gift—that joy and curse—a writer's imagination.

So Keller skulked thro' Berlin for months, lonely and defiantly secluded. Occasionally he came across compatriots, but even these he avoided for the most part. He spent his time dreaming of the great drama he was one day to write, he worked intermittently,—very intermittently—at "*Der Grüne Heinrich*," he planned a dozen dramas, he haunted the theatres, while his money lasted. At length he determined to seek out Fanny Lewald again, but the sentimental, pretentious pose of the Lewald circle put him to flight. Then he took heart and approached Varnhagen von Ense. He was an old man now, Rahel's friend, lover, husband. Rahel was long dead and most of the brilliant company of writers and thinkers who had made Berlin a literary centre had gone to their graves: Jean Paul, Fichte, La Motte-Fouqué, Chamisso, Brentano, Tieck, Schleiermacher, Friedrich Schlegel had played their parts and vanished. But Varnhagen von Ense lingered on in Berlin, while in Rahel's

stead his niece Ludmilla Assing was "lady of his stately house". Gottfried Keller was so awkward a visitor to a stately house! Who can tell how different it might have been if Rahel had still been there, warm-hearted, subtle Rahel, with her Jewish intuition, her genius for understanding genius? She was a fascinating figure in that old Berlin of the early years of the nineteenth century. She was a Jewess in a country and at a time when Jews were regarded as pariahs, who recently had existed shut away in a dirty, swarming ghetto; a debased race only allowed by law to practise medicine, the healing of Christian bodies by the Jewish physician's care being graciously accorded. Usury was the other calling the Jews were free to adopt, and they were generously permitted to assist impecunious Christians. And yet it was possible for the potent charm of a Jewish woman to vanquish prejudice and for Rahel to hold a veritable court in an attic. She had sufficient money to live without earning, but she could not gain social success by lavish hospitality. Her hospitality was one which no wealth can command: the hospitality of the mind. Up in her little room "below the roof" as the descriptive German phrase has it, she gathered round her all who loved literature and art: authors, diplomats, actresses, princes, ladies of the court, philosophers, toiled up the steep, narrow stairs to seek the company of the Demoiselle Rahel Lewin. It was the day of the salon, and Rahel's was the first salon in Prussia's capital. Another Jewess, Henriette Herz, was queen of a more opulent Berlin salon, but her hold over fashion was easily explained, for she was possessed of wealth and marvellous beauty. They called her the tragic Muse, and all Berlin spoke of her surprising loveliness, and of her great tho' blameless friendship for the Protestant Pastor Schleiermacher, one of the most remarkable men of his day; renowned preacher, author, theologian, philosopher and man of the world, an unusual combination! Rahel Lewin was not dowered with beauty or wealth, but she attracted an even more interesting circle around her. She was human and simple, tender though brilliant and no hint of scandal marred her fair name. She was far from being a prude, yet when, as a middle-aged woman, she married Varnhagen von Ense,

author and diplomat, the slander-mongers found no ugly histories wherewith to smirch her. Everyone who met her fell under her spell, even Madame de Staël, indignant at the homage paid to this woman "who had never even written a book," succumbed to her fascination when they met at the poet Brinckmann's house. "Directly Rahel and Madame de Staël were introduced to one another," he tells us, "they moved away to a quiet corner and talked for an hour and a half, oblivious of the distinguished company in the room. Then Madame de Staël came to me: 'J'implore le pardon! Vous n'avez pas exagéré! Elle est étonnante,' she said."

The years went on, hard years they were. War swept over Prussia, Napoleon held the country in thrall, Berlin was occupied for two years by the conqueror's troops. Then Prussia, in that grand effort, the War of Liberation, shook off the hated yoke, and the reconstruction of Prussia began. Through all this time of change and stress, Rahel's salon remained an intellectual centre. Everyone who owned the passport of intelligence had the entrée to her house. The only alteration was that after her marriage to Varnhagen von Ense in 1814, the little room "below the roof" was exchanged for a large house. Here in 1821 appeared that wayward being Heinrich Heine. It was not the world-famed poet who came to Rahel's salon, but Harry Heine the chétif, beardless youth with the beautiful blue eyes and the mass of auburn hair. His shyness contrasted oddly with his outbursts of mordant wit, but Rahel recognised the pain which lurked beneath the cynical, often ungracious words and she drew him into her charmed circle. She was no longer young then, the "dear, good, little woman with the great soul" as Heine called her, she was over fifty and Heine was twenty-one, but he loved her with that tenderness which lives in much of his poetry untouched by the sensuality which tortured and enraptured his ardent Hebrew nature. The friendship between Rahel and Heine was not without its storms. What real friendship ever is? She resented his dedicating the "Heimkehr" to her without her permission; she raged at his caustic criticism of her idol Goethe; she was distressed and offended at his brilliant scurrilous attack on the poet Platen; she almost quarrelled

with him when he returned to Berlin in 1827, a celebrated poet, a trifle puffed up with his fame; but she remained a wise, pure influence in his life, altho' as she wrote in one of her letters: "I am never against him, but I see him as he is." Heine responded with faithful friendship. "I run about so wildly in the world," he wrote to Varnhagen, "but if anyone wants to claim me as their dog, I can always show them written on my collar: "J'appartiens à Madame Varnhagen."

Rahel would have understood and helped another reticent, timid being, another poet whose genius was destined to enrich the world,—Gottfried Keller,—but when he came to the house where her personality had shed such warmth and light, she was no longer there, and he only found an aged sorrowful man, Varnhagen von Ense and his niece Ludmilla Assing. They were very friendly to Keller, but their salon had become a formal gathering, though the intellectuals of Berlin thronged it at the coffee hour, and Keller, sitting silent among the crowd of polished worldlings and literary people, never threw off the shyness which oppressed him. Varnhagen gave Keller Rahel's copy of Angelus Silesius' "Cherubinischer Wandersmann" whence he took the "Gefrorener Christ" verse which he used in the Dortchen Schönfund episode of "Der Grüne Heinrich."

At Varnhagen's house Keller at least rubbed shoulders with the distinguished men of the day: Leopold von Ranke, the historian; Storm the author, who afterwards was his friend and correspondent, Geibel the poet, Paul Heyse the novelist. The brothers Grimm were there, Jacob whose learned works on the German language and mythology, Wilhelm whose studies on the Middle-Ages and the German dictionary, which was their joint work, we forget in grateful love for the fairy tales which enriched our childhood with many happy hours. They were very old when Gottfried Keller saw them, these brothers Grimm, relics of the past like Alexander von Humboldt whom he also saw, a literary veteran of over eighty years. Then there was Bettina von Arnim, no longer the elfin creature who had fallen asleep on Goethe's knee (or said she had) but now a woman of sixty-five. Keller did not make her

acquaintance, but she was an ornament, or a curiosity, of the Varnhagen salon while he was in Berlin.

In 1851, Keller made the acquaintance of the publisher Duncker, at whose house he found a less formal literary centre, a freer tone and avowed republican sentiments. Lassalle, the fiery socialist, was a friend of Duncker's and Keller listened to glowing tirades on democracy. There was one friend of the Duncker family who poisoned the atmosphere for Keller, this was Dr. Eduard Vehse, for whom he promptly conceived a violent hatred. Vehse was an historical scandal-monger, his life's work was a history of the love intrigues of the South German courts in many volumes.* It is one of the most entertaining books of its kind and was founded on an immense research in archives and old letters. Of course his books are not all rose-water, there are many malodorous pages, but it is a serious, accurate work.

With the Duncker couple lived Betty Tendering, Frau Duncker's sister, a tall lady with a classic profile and a mass of wavy black hair. What had the morose little man with the big head and the great dark eyes, what had Gottfried Keller better to do than to fall in love with her? Among the pages of the Grüne Heinrich manuscript there are caricatures of a stunted man with a ragged beard carrying a long pole on his shoulder, a pole with leaves and flowers forming the letter B! And written over and over again are the words: "*La partie n'est pas égale.*" Poor Meister Gottfried! "*la partie*" was indeed not equal, he always played a losing game with women. On another loose page in the manuscript is a drawing of a skeleton in a jester's cap playing the fiddle and written below is: "*Herr Gottfried Tränensimpell!*" (we may translate it as Master Gottfried Crybaby). So he loved and mocked at himself for loving and Betty Tendering seems to have led him on. Perhaps she came near to loving him—who can tell? For a time he haunted the Duncker's house. One day he appeared there with a black eye. They teased him and accused him of nocturnal brawling. He denied it hotly then, but years afterwards

* *Geschichte der Kleinen Höfe.* E. Vehse.

he owed to Betty's sister, Frau Duncker, that for three nights running he had eased his aching heart by picking quarrels in a tavern and giving his opponents a good sound beating. The third night he had met his match in a porter who had drubbed him soundly. Meanwhile Mistress Betty had gone off to Switzerland and had taken it into her pretty head to visit Keller's mother. There was much excitement when the richly dressed lady appeared in the old Zürich streets asking for Frau Keller. "She came upon a silly old couple who, out of sheer stupidity or obstinacy, pretended they did not know my poor mother! Hardly had the "apparition" vanished, then these same sour, stupid, old creatures raised such a pother about the beauty, splendour and graciousness of the lady who had come from Berlin to visit my mother, that the story ran like wild fire among my acquaintances." Keller received letters from home implying that he had conquered a beautiful woman's heart at last. And he had not even spoken his love! To add to his sadness his Brunswick publisher Vieweg, surely the most patient publisher the world has ever known, was continually pressing for the completion of "Der Grüne Heinrich." The book ought to have been ready in 1850; and Vieweg had advanced a hundred Thalers in May 1850. Keller had sent so slim a packet of manuscript that in three days the printers had finished it and Vieweg wrote begging for more copy. He tempted Keller by promises to publish a volume of his poems, if he would first let him have more "Grüne Heinrich." In September he proposed to Keller to let him have the original concept and thus avoid the delay of recopying. In October Vieweg had to admit he must postpone the book's appearance till the following year. Will Keller kindly send him some more manuscript? A few pages were dispatched. Then for months silence from Keller, who was dreaming of his unwritten drama and sketching out plots and situations for a series of "Novellen." His brain was pregnant with the first volume of "The People of Seldwyla" and he hated the "Grüne Heinrich." Vieweg wrote constantly, imploring, demanding, admonishing. At length he induced Keller to finish the first volume. Then followed another long pause and Keller had not even returned the

proof sheets. Vieweg grew really angry, he wrote he would refuse any later work of Keller's, he even threatened legal proceedings, but if Keller felt it possible to finish the "Grüne Heinrich," he offered him a dwelling and board in Brunswick. Surely, the quiet, the old-world atmosphere of Brunswick would help this obstinate genius to concentrate on his work? Keller vouchsafed no answer to this proposal, except to announce that he must be allowed a fortnight's respite in order to finish a drama! He was rich in plans, but the delight of visualising a drama, of working out situations and characters, sufficed him. This travail accomplished, the child of his brain perished—when it had lived long enough for him to feel it a tangible being his interest flagged, and, ere he could bring himself to materialise his dream-child by actual writing, his genius had conceived again and his whole strength was turned to the forming of another dream-child, of another drama. Vieweg importuned Keller and slowly, a few pages at a time, the "Grüne Heinrich" progressed—written unwillingly in the intervals of Keller's dramatic dreams. Thus the second volume was at last completed and Vieweg began to woo him for the third. Keller, in love with Betty Tendering, enamoured of his obdurate mistress Drama, philandering with the "People of Seldwyla," wearily wrote the third volume and then, wrapping his soul in silence and dreams, he left Vieweg in suspense for a whole year! Now Vieweg, who had advanced various small sums, claimed either the fourth volume or the return of the money; although he offered to raise the price of each page if Keller delivered him the fourth volume by Christmas 1854. The dreamer had not a gold piece to call his own, he was hungry, he was despairing, but, though he gave Vieweg a solemn promise to let him have the manuscript by Christmas, it lasted till Palm Sunday 1855 before he "scrawled the last chapter, literally in tears."

At war with the world, sulking the Dunckers because they persisted in seeing the hated Vehse, estranged from Betty Tendering, these last Berlin months were very miserable for Keller. There is an idea in the minds of his biographers that he had declared his love and been refused, but both Betty and

her sister maintained a discreet silence on the subject to the day of their death, and Keller was equally reticent. It is known that Betty Tendering had letters from him in her possession, but she burned them. Later, she made a prosperous, unromantic marriage with a brewer and lived to an honoured old-age. She is, however, remembered as the type of the ruthless coquette as portrayed by Keller in Lydia, the heroine of "Pankraz der Schmoller", the first novelle in "Die Leute von Seldwyla." (The people of Seldwyla.) Keller was thinking out these novellen while Vieweg was waiting for the Grüne Heinrich! In July 1855 Vieweg had received half of Vol. I of "Seldwyla" and by September the whole manuscript was in his hands. Keller who had laboured so painfully with the "Grüne Heinrich," because it was not the form his genius required, had written and perfected these little masterpieces in a few months: "the writing of them was child's play," he says in one of his letters. In November 1855 he left Berlin, and after nearly seven years absence returned to Zürich. He found his mother reconciled with his conduct at last, for in "Der Grüne Heinrich" she possessed a proof that her son was, after all, no mere idler. For years she had doubted his talent and mourned his apparent sloth, humiliated in her sober middle-class pride that he had not become a prosperous, respected burgher. Some hint of this feeling must have crept into her letters, for we find in Keller's answers, in the midst of his constant appeals for money, many assurances that he will achieve success some day. Why must it be that those who are nearest and dearest to an artist nearly always disbelieve in him? How unutterably bitter is the wisdom of Christ's saying: "A prophet is not without honour save in his own country and in his own house!" And yet, in the secret heart of those whose task it is to create, there is an abiding yearning for the appreciation of the home people. Alas! either they never find it, or it is that boastful over-estimation which is almost as hard to bear as the negation. But it is before achievement and success, while the artist, still distrustful of his power, is struggling with a thousand unforeseen difficulties, that the pain of this unbelief stabs him most mercilessly. Keller writes to his mother:

"I beg you earnestly not to despair of me." He knew during those lonely Berlin years, while he was battling with a form which was unsuited to his genius, that in Zürich he was accounted a lazy prodigal, a failure. He knew this and suffered acutely with the hypersensitiveness of the born writer, that quivering, suspicious hypersensitiveness without which no brain power has ever sufficed for the writing of a real book.

When Keller reached Zürich, "Der Grüne Heinrich" had gone before him and the home-coming was very pleasant to him, although he brought no dramatic work as he had dreamed. His mother's satisfaction with the "Grüne Heinrich" was not shared by his sister Regula, who resented the fact that there was no mention of her in the book. Poor Regula, she was fated to be overlooked, it was the destiny of her drab personality. We are apt to imagine that drab personalities are content with, or unaware of, their drabness, but, indeed they generally disapprovingly admire scarlet and gold more than any one on earth. In any case, Regula was hurt and annoyed, although "she set no store by her brother's scribblings!" One wonders whether the picture of the sister in Pankraz der Schmoller mollified her? For Pankraz was written when Keller reached home, and the first volume of "Die Leute von Seldwyla" was being printed. It was published in January 1856. Keller was on sure ground when he built the novelle. The long narrative was always irksome to him, he grew weary and restive before he reached the end. When he undertook a full novel as in the "Grüne Heinrich," and later in "Martin Salander," he lost his way, not that he was a sculptor of Tanagra figures, but his minute characterisation, his wealth of detail, did not need the dimensions of a full statue. His written art is akin to the old Dutch masters' painting, he is a Terborg, a Jan Steen, not a Michel Angelo. And yet, he is never finicky, his is great art, forceful, solid, sturdy. When in "Der Grüne Heinrich" he speaks of Jean Paul, he unwittingly defines his own work better than any critic. He says that Jean Paul definitely expressed that which we ourselves have thought restlessly and indistinctly: "every day life is tenderly yet shrewdly observed,"

"it is a minute drawing of human nature, and yet with the breadth of the infinite and the eternal above it." And again: "this is the difference between him (Jean Paul) and the other heroes and kings of the mind: with them we are distinguished guests made graciously welcome in beautiful dwellings—but we are always guests; with him we rest upon a brother's heart." It is precisely thus with Gottfried Keller himself, he turns a flashlight upon the perplexities of our minds; he gives us a minute picture of human existence, but we feel that the breadth and inexhaustibility of the universe is never shut out of the vision by his intense scrutiny of details. His is not a stranger's voice, it is someone we know well, someone wise and kind and strong who speaks to us, "we rest upon a brother's heart."

The romantic school, the novellen of Heinrich von Kleist, E. T. A. Hoffmann, Eichendorff, La Motte Fouqué and Chamisso certainly influenced Keller, but the rustic tales by Pestalozzi and Jeremias Gotthelf also played their part in his development, although like all genius, in distinction to talent, he stands alone and belongs to no school. He is romantic because all poets are romantic, he is realistic because all honest writing is realistic, he is often pedagogic because the Swiss mentality can never escape it; in fine he is an original and fearless genius.

The first volume of the "People of Seldwyla" contains five novellen: "Pankraz der Schmoller" (Pankratz the sulky); "Romeo und Julia auf dem Dorfe" (The village Romeo and Juliet); "Frau Regel Amrain und ihr Jüngster" (Frau Regel Amrain and her youngest son); "Die drei gerechten Kammacher" (The three righteous Comb-cutters); and "Spiegel the Cat, a Fairy-story."

Seldwyla was an imaginary place which Keller endowed with the characteristics of the Swiss "Klein Stadt." In German literature Kotzebue's invented city "Krähwinkel" (in his comedy "Die Deutschen Kleinstädter") stands as the type of the small country town where prejudice and gossip dominate. In English literature we have the same idea in Mrs. Gaskell's "Cranford," but there the small town is drawn

with a gentle touch, whereas Kotzebue's mockery is biting and Heine borrows the word "Krähwinkel" and uses it as a jibe. Keller's wit is never cruel, his humour is always kindly, however keen, and though he makes fun of the small town atmosphere, it is obvious that he loves it. It is a "genre" picture he paints, no caricature.

The book opens with a preface describing Seldwyla which lies "somewhere in Switzerland," a town with ancient walls and towers, a town unchanged during three hundred years. The citizens were contrary, crotchety beings, always in opposition to whatever régime happened to be in power: if a radical government chanced to be leading, they were sure to be conservative; if a conservative body was ruling they were certain to break windows in protest. But it was not very serious, they just grumbled and enjoyed their leisure, their wine and their grumbings. In Seldwyla is portrayed the Zürich of a hundred years ago, but it might as well be any other Swiss town of that time.

Near the old town wall, there lived a thrifty widow with her son Pankraz, a sullen, stubborn boy of fourteen, and Esther, her pretty daughter of twelve years old. Esther was a pattern child and Pankraz a detestable oaf, and so the mother, after the manner of mothers, loved him the best. Mother and daughter earned their bread by spinning, Pankraz earned and learned nothing. Esther's only amusement was teasing her brother at meal-times, which he punished by sulking for days. As time went on, the boy perseveringly did and learned nothing save to cultivate sulking as a high art, wherewith he tormented his mother, his sister—and himself. Esther was daily reduced to weeping, but the sun of her nature dried her tears quickly, and this frivolity of being so angered Pankraz that his sulks increased and out of self-made sadness he often wept secretly. The account of this uncongenial family life is full of quiet irony, yet Keller's indulgent smile lurks in each line. One day Esther ventured to tease Pankraz at supper, and when he sat sulking again and refusing to eat, she laughed aloud at his sour looks. This was too much and Pankraz stalked out of the room. The next morning when his mother went to wake him, he was

not there, nor did he return that day. The next day and the next there was no sign of him. The mother and sister searched the town for him in vain. A week went by. "How long a week is—how long even a day, when we do not know where the loved ones are! How terrible is the silence which reigns over the world when no sound of the beloved name is heard—and yet we know they live and breathe somewhere!"

Five years went past—ten years and still no news of Pankraz. The days dragged by monotonously and the mother and Esther did not know if Pankraz was dead or living. It was indeed a long and thorough sulking-fit! Esther grew to be a pretty young woman, then to a gentle old maid, "but she would never leave her mother, partly out of filial love, partly out of curiosity and fear of missing the moment of her brother's arrival. For they always believed Pankraz would come back."

One weekday afternoon in summer, when Seldwyla was more than ordinary peaceful, the widow and Esther sat at an open window behind their little rosemarie garden. The mother was spinning and Esther was sewing. It was several hours since the midday meal, yet none of the neighbours had quarrelled. Then the old cobbler over the way, thinking it was time for something to happen, sneezed loudly "Hupschi!" the old bookbinder across the street called out: "Bless you!" and all the neighbours laughed. Keller wrought a gem in this scene. It is so old-world and leisurely, so full of sunshine and peace. It is like a picture by Maurice von Schwind or Spitzweg.

There came a thrilling interruption, thrilling at least to the inhabitants of sleepy Seldwyla: an organ-grinder with a barrel organ came down the street. He droned out a tune the Seldwyders thought very pleasing, but tears came to the mother's eyes for this song of another land increased her longing for Pankrazius. The cobbler gave the organ-grinder a "Kreuzer," the man went on and the street relapsed into its habitual tranquillity. But not for long. This summer afternoon was full of incident. A tramp appeared with a cage slung over his shoulder wherein was a big strange bird. The neighbours gathered round while he told them it was an eagle from

America. They were amused and curious, but the widow grew sad, for she thought how she knew nothing of America where perchance her Pankraz was wandering. After the tramp had gone on his way, the Seldwylers loitered gossiping in the sunny street. Two such unwonted events had put them out of love with work and they hoped for a fresh diversion. And now the third adventure occurred and Seldwyla's repose was again broken. This time it was a caravan with a camel and a dancing bear. The neighbours were delighted, but the widow could not repress her tears, for when the bear growled, she was moved to pity the heavy ill-tempered brute—and she thought of her lost son! When the caravan had passed on, the neighbours slipped off to drink their evening beer and Esther and the widow retired to prepare supper. Then Esther said: "It's in my mind that Pankraz is sure to come back to-day. Never have so many unexpected things happened, never have there been so many birds and camels and bears and monkeys all together!" The mother reproved her for comparing Pankraz to such animals, oblivious that she had done the same in her mind. She sighed: "Alas! I shall never live to see him return!" and even as she said this, the most astounding event of the day occurred: a calèche and four horses rattled into the quiet street where the evening sunshine still lingered. In the carriage sat a sunburnt, bearded man wrapped in a French military cloak. At his feet was a lion's skin and, on the seat opposite, lay a sword and a long eastern tobacco-pipe. The man snatched up the lion's skin and the sword, sprang out of the carriage and unhesitatingly approached the widow's house. The mother and Esther watched him in surprised curiosity, and it was only when they heard how the stranger stamped across their narrow landing that they recognised Pankraz' step! The mother sat trembling and staring at the bearded man, who smiled as Pankraz had never smiled, and lifted his military cap with a politeness Pankraz had never shown. All this only lasted an instant and then the mother was in his arms.

Pankraz returned like some kindly magician bringing delicacies for supper. Here Gottfried Keller has a touch of Dickens and we grow greedy as we read of the chicken and

pasties, of the good wine and cake! The inquisitive neighbours crowded in agape to see the prodigal who had returned as a French Colonel in a carriage and four. Pankraz had brought a packet of wax candles, remembering the dim light of his mother's old oil-lamp. He lit several candles and the trio sat down to supper. Then, when he had kindled his Turkish pipe, and courteously dismissed the neighbours, he related the story of his adventures. It was quite a long yarn.

Pankraz had tramped to Hamburg where he had been taken on to an English merchant ship and had earned his living by repairing old pistols and muskets, which the skipper sold as new to the natives of tropical islands. When the ship returned to England, Pankraz bade farewell to this dreary trade and enlisted in a regiment which was starting for India. His taciturnity stood him in good stead, he drilled, marched and obeyed in silence. All went well with him, the officers found him a steady, conscientious fellow, he was promoted to be a corporal and was employed in office work by the Colonel, who took a fancy to him. This Colonel was a solitary eccentric man of fifty, whose wife had left him, taking their only daughter with her. The Colonel had a house outside the town and a garden of palms, cypresses, sycamore trees and tropical flowers, and Pankraz was soldier, overseer, gardener and companion, although he seldom spoke. Not that he was sulky as of yore, but he had so accustomed himself to sullenness that it was well-nigh impossible for him to utter more than a short sentence. After some five years the Colonel was appointed Governor of the district and about the same time his daughter Lydia arrived from Ireland. Lydia was beautiful and she was frank and friendly in manner, although there was something mysterious about her, at any rate she baffled Pankraz. She was clever and spoke several foreign languages and had read many books, but she was careful never to embarrass men with her superior knowledge. She was innocent, artless, modest and womanly, and her blue eyes were very serious. As Pankraz spoke of her, his face took on a foolish look. How well we know that expression of the enamoured man when he is trying to analyse why and how a woman has fooled him!

The candles had burned half down, Pankraz's mother and sister were nodding and their regular breathing showed they were asleep, but Pankraz noticed nothing. When does a man notice even his most sympathetic listener, once he has embarked on the story of his heart? Pankraz explained to his slumbering confidants how little he then knew of women, for the native girls had not attracted him and the English women he had considered too shrewd and independent; therefore he had concluded that womankind meant nothing to him. Of course, Lydia was different to other women, that was why he felt so happy when he was near her. But not a step did he go out of his accustomed way to be with her, yet when she was not there, he thought much about her, not as a lover, but as a friend. One day, some six months after her arrival, he was at work in the rosery, when she came, sat down near him and ate a small basketful of cherries, prating gayly the while. Pankraz listened and smiled, but he did not respond. She went and fetched a lace nightcap whereon she began to sew some soft ribbons. This made Pankraz feel exceedingly shy. He worked busily and did not look at her. She soon went away, but after a few minutes she reappeared, this time with a Chinese puzzle in her hand. She sat down with her back turned to Pankraz and silently played with the ivory toy. Now he was free to look at her as much as he wished. He gazed and gazed until she put the puzzle into her pocket, and springing up, without giving him a look, went off singing to herself. "My soul turned up its nose at her conduct—but from that hour I was in love with Lydia. In a turmoil of feeling I left my rose trees, fetched my rifle and went into the jungle. I saw many animals, but I forgot to shoot, or if I raised my rifle to aim at one, the thought of the lady's curious behaviour came over me again and I lost sight of the quarry. What could she want of me? What did she mean, I asked myself repeatedly. Somehow I felt grateful for whatever she might choose to mean, for I reflected how ungainly and unremarkable I was. Then it struck me that possibly she was a frivolous creature, who did not shrink from playing the fool even with a poor Corporal's heart."

Lydia continued her pursuit of Pankraz. She agreed with

whatever he said; she expressed opinions she knew he held; she made use of expressions he had employed; she was like a child seeking to propitiate a stern teacher. She seemed cast down if he failed to notice her. Pankraz was bewildered. Then the Governor began to tease Pankraz, he openly accused Lydia of being in love with him and laughed at her for it in Pankraz' presence. "Tactless and bad taste," grumbled Pankraz and he retorted by a more than ordinary sulky mien. Lydia grew wan and melancholy. She looked positively ill. She followed Pankraz about and he had some rapturous moments when she talked to him, but he generally cut her short, because he was not sure she was not making fun of him and he feared his own foolishness. She lent him a big volume bound in black leather "This was by a certain Shakespeare," and it led Pankraz into still greater danger, for when he read what monsters Desdemona, Helena and Imogen had loved, it dawned on him that women might love unworthy mates. It was thus with Lydia! Like a burst of sunshine athwart thunder clouds the thought came to him. Either it was one of the inexplicable vagaries of Fate, or else it was the glorious generosity of women—but Lydia surely loved him!

For months Pankraz went about like a somnambulist, but he carefully maintained his sulky attitude all the same. He was as afraid of anything happening to open the gates of Heaven to him, as a Christian is of death! Pankraz neglected his work and his worst hours were when playing chess with the Governor, he was forced to gather his wits together. Lydia was increasingly friendly, but he was still incredulous and did not declare his love. At last he could bear it no longer and he decided to leave. He told the Governor he meant to rejoin the army, especially as there was trouble with some border tribe and there would be fighting. The Governor upbraided and expostulated unavailingly. For several days Pankraz hardly saw Lydia, but if he chanced to meet her she cast him haughty looks. It was whispered in the house that the light in her room burned all night. Lydia could not sleep! The day before Pankraz's departure, he noticed her eyes were red from weeping, but he did not betray his knowledge and took care not

to relax his habitual grimness. Towards evening Lydia, followed him into the garden. For some time he strode on, affecting not to see her, then he halted and asked her harshly why she followed him. "She looked down and her cheeks glowed. Then she grew deathly pale and I could see she was trembling. She raised her eyes to mine and it seemed she could not speak. After a minute, in a voice wherein pride struggled with humility, she replied: "I suppose I can walk in my own garden if I choose?" "Certainly," I answered unsteadily and walked on so swiftly that she could scarcely keep pace with me. She did so however and I saw her eyes were full of tears. My face burned and I felt my eyes grow wet. I thought to myself: if this woman loves me and I can honourably ask for her hand, I shall be bound to serve her to the day of my death—even if she turns out to be a very devil. We reached an orange grove and the fragrancy assailed my senses. Apparently it had the same power over her, for she sank down upon a seat, covered her face with her hands and wept. In a quivering voice I asked what ailed her. "Has a lady ever been so tormented and ill-used?" she cried, "oh! from what barbarous country do you come, I should like to know? And what log of wood do you carry in your breast instead of a heart?"

"How do I torment, and how do I ill-use you?" I asked.

"You are a proud, rough, cruel man!" she retorted.

I could bear no more: "You would not say that, if you knew how little rough and cruel I am to you in my heart," I exclaimed, "it is just my humility which — —"

As I hesitated, she looked up with an appealing smile which robbed me of the little self-control I had. I, who had never dreamed I could kneel at the feet of even the best beloved woman, found myself on my knees before Lydia, kissing the hem of her skirt, while my tears flowed fast. She pushed me gently away, bidding me rise. Her smile had grown radiant. "Yes, I will tell you now," I cried and I poured out the story of my heart. She listened eagerly, while I stammered out how unutterably I loved her. She sat smiling and nodding like a child who has at last received a coveted toy. When I paused she gave me her hand and in a calm, matter-of-fact voice she

said: "I thank you, my friend, for your affection. Believe me, it grieves me to think you have been unhappy for my sake. You are a good man and I respect you for your honest feeling."

These words fell like ice on Pankraz's heart, but he thought, having been so slighted, she could not immediately surrender. Humbly he begged her forgiveness had he caused her a moment's annoyance. She told him his sullen manners and his insensibility to her friendliness had certainly annoyed her and she was the more gratified to find he had some vestige of human feeling in him. What she had resented most was that his unresponsiveness had caused her to doubt her own power and charm. For the rest, she coolly informed him, she felt nothing at all for him or for any one else, and she wound up with the hope that, as he was so meek and good-natured, he would accept the inevitable and bear her no ill-will. He reproached her with her heartless play-acting; how had she even succeeded in looking pale and ill? She answered that if he had not been so morose and unsusceptible, she would probably not have troubled to conquer him. Angrily he demanded whether she did not realise his love would turn to hatred now? She mocked him and told him her image was graven on his heart and her memory would live on in his blood. They wrangled for some time until he broke down and sobbed. Thro' his tears he said: "Oh! Miss Lydia, you are an ass! Yes, the greatest ass I have ever seen!" She stared at him in amazement, then she tried to smile mockingly, but the smile went crooked somehow and only made her appear the more abashed. He told her it was usually the privilege of men to be asses, but she was so powerful in her foolishness that he could not call her a goose, as he would another woman! Then he stormed off, telling himself it was all his own sulky fault and that had he been friendly and gay, Lydia would never have been tempted to practise her wicked wiles upon him.

Pankraz reëntered the army, fought during the campaign and rose to the rank of captain. Then his desire went back to Lydia and being now an officer he deemed he might honourably win her as his wife. The Governor's reception was gracious, but when Pankraz saw Lydia was surrounded by half a dozen swains whom she had reduced to slavery by her unremitting

coquetry, he went sorrowfully away, left the army and started for home. His way led him thro' Paris and here he lingered, hoping that the sight of so many beautiful women would banish Lydia's memory from his heart, but he found no woman who could compare with her. Indignant with himself and vowing to forget the witch, he took service in the French army and went to Algiers. He was not yet cured of his sullenness, but he was a competent officer and he quickly rose to colonel's rank.

When Pankraz reached this part of his story, he discovered that his mother and sister were asleep.

The next morning he informed them they had missed the point of the narrative, but that he would finish it at once and then he meant never to mention it again. He told them he became a lion-hunter in Africa and that there was a terrible lion, long the scourge of the country-side, which he swore he would destroy. One morning he was searching for it; the sun burned fiercely and Pankraz, hot and weary, clambered down a steep bank to drink from a little stream, leaving his rifle on the bank above. His mind was so full of Lydia that he had forgotten the lion. He had drunk deep and was bathing his face in the cool water, and yearning for Lydia, when a growl startled him. The lion was standing on the bank, just over the rifle! He crouched ready to spring, but Pankraz faced him, resolutely gazing into the great brute's eyes. Slowly the lion lay down, glaring at his prey. If Pankraz had turned his eyes away for a flash, he would have been a dead man. For hours they remained thus, the unarmed man and the mighty beast staring unflinchingly at one another. Pankraz' mind was busy with the past. Evidently this was to be his last sulking-fit, he thought. He and the lion would stare at each other until human strength failed, and then death would come in one moment of horror. Cramped by the strain of standing motionless, he began to tremble and his parched lips moved. Instantly the lion half rose—growling—The sweat ran down the man's face, but he succeeded in controlling his limbs, bit his teeth into his trembling lip and gazed unwaveringly into his foe's eyes. Hour after hour dragged by. The sun stood high in the heavens, slowly,

slowly, it shifted westwards and still this ghastly waiting continued. Pankraz made a vow that if, by some miracle, he escaped death this time, this should be his last sulking-fit'

A breath of air touched his face, the sun was low on the horizon and the heat was waning, but the man's strength was failing fast, he would know nothing of the coolness of the night. Pankraz and the lion were so locked in each other's gaze, that neither noticed two soldiers running towards them and it was only when a shot rang out that Pankraz realised help had come at last. The lion turned to face his assailants and Pankraz staggered to his rifle and, despite his trembling hand, succeeded in shooting his antagonist thro' the head. The soldiers gave Pankraz wine and chafed his numbed limbs and he soon recovered from his fearsome ordeal, but what astonished his rescuers the most was their Colonel's unwonted affability! There was not a trace of his habitual grim manner. Pankraz had renounced sullenness forever. Soon after this he left the army and set out for Seldwyla bringing the lion's skin with him.

"Pankraz the Sulky" became a respected citizen and the joy of his mother's heart. The only subject upon which he remained obdurately silent was the story of his love, which his mother and sister had missed by falling asleep. When they importuned him to tell them at least the name of his enchantress, he invariably answered that it was enough for them to know he had been cured of his sulkiness by a deceitful woman and a wild animal.

CHAPTER III.

The Village Romeo and Juliet. Frau Amrain and her Youngest Son. The Three Righteous Combcutters. Spiegel the Cat.

Romeo and Julia auf dem Dorfe" is the most perfect thing Gottfried Keller wrote—when one has just reread it one is tempted to call it one of the most perfect things in literature! It is a Jean François Millet picture in words and it exhales the fragancy of a hay field. It is full of tenderness, of childhood's innocence, then later of youth's rapture, but there is never a hint of sensuality, it is incarnate passion, love, despair and death. The characters are some of the most living even Keller wrought: the grasping, greedy peasants Manz and Marti, the fathers of Sali and Vrenchen; Frau Manz the pretentious village-woman, who makes herself ridiculous in the town; and the sinister and mysterious figure of the Black Fiddler; but above all Vrenli and Sali, the poor little lovers. No account of the story can convey any idea of its beauty, for its wonder lies in the treatment, in the freshness, simplicity, the restraint and force of Keller's work. It is redolent of the good, brown earth, of the breeze across the fields, of the woodlands. To one "who has been long in city pent" the appeal of the whole novelle is irresistible. It is, up to date, the only Keller story which has been well translated into English. Edith Wharton achieved this in 1915. It is interesting to trace the novelle's origin in Keller's thought. There is a passage in his diary dated September 1847, therefore nine years before he wrote the novelle, which heralds the first pages in the "Village Romeo and Juliet." It is a word-sketch of a scene Keller noted one sunny

September morning: "two peasants are ploughing, they are talking of the disgracefully neglected condition of the intervening strip of land, left untilled by its owner who has long disappeared from the country-side. The two men shout their comments across this barren field and meanwhile they surreptitiously guide their ploughs over the boundary line, thus each appropriating a few yards of the waste land". This is almost word for word the opening scene of the village idyll and it is the axle upon which the story turns, for the filched ground is the reason of the quarrel between the peasants which causes the tragedy of their children, Sali and Vrenchen. About the same time as the note in Keller's diary a paragraph in a Zürich newspaper caught his attention: "In a village of Altsellerhausen, near Leipzig, a youth of nineteen and a girl of seventeen years fell in love. They were children of poor parents, neighbours, who having long been on bad terms, refused their consent to the lovers' marriage. On the evening of August 5th, the two young people attended a dance at the village inn, where they danced until long after midnight and then left the inn together. The following morning their bodies were found in a meadow near-by. They had committed suicide." This dry account of a rustic tragedy had evidently haunted Keller's mind and, blended with the memory of the peasants ploughing beside the barren field, had developed into the piteous history of Sali and Vrenchen. Originally Keller intended to write a poem on the subject, and in 1848 he wrote a few rather halting verses, but the poem was never completed.

The success of the "Grüne Heinrich" was disappointing. The literary world recognised the book's merits, but the general public was uninterested and the sale was small. The "People of Seldwyla" however attracted a larger public, tho' there were many hostile voices in the press and the "Village Romeo and Juliet" came in for its share of adverse criticism. The end of the story was objected to as immoral! The absurd verdict of one critic was that as Sali and Vrenchen were neither Montague nor Capulet "*noblesse ne les obligeait pas*" and thus the tragic ending was unnecessary! Even Auerbach condemned

the title as being taken from literature and therefore unfitted for a realistic story. This stung Gottfried Keller, and, in a letter to Auerbach, he pleaded for his story's title: "What is written belongs to the paper world and yet Shakespeare, although printed matter, is life itself and can never be dead recollection." Gradually the cavillers fell silent and the daring of calling a mere novelle by the name of a world classic was justified by the new work's admission among the classical stories of literature. Had it been presumption it would have evoked ridicule and then time would have wiped out the memory of it, but time, which alone confirms, and so often reverses, contemporary appreciation, crowned "The Village Romeo and Juliet" which is now recognised as the greatest rustic tragedy of German literature.

The next novelle in "The People of Seldwyla" is "Frau Regel Amrain and her youngest son." It is didactic and lacks much of Keller's quality of colour. It is resolutely unpoetic, perhaps purposely so, as a contrast to "The Village Romeo and Juliet"; for altho' Keller worked each novelle as a complete and independent study, yet he grouped the novellen in the frame of his series with carefully weighed intention. In this didactic story everybody is educated by Frau Amrain, who was too uncompromisingly upright to be anything but intensely annoying. She was a woman one would have rejoiced to have caught out in a good human sin! It is characteristic of Keller's directness and patient trust in the underlying goodness of human nature, that we never hear a note of irritation in his voice as he tells of this complacently superior female!

Herr Amrain, a well-to-do button-maker, had invested his capital in a stone quarry and had been obliged to take a mortgage on it, which he had intended to pay off gradually, but the conservative lender, offended by Amrain's political opinions, had foreclosed, and the unfortunate mortgagee had been forced to leave the country. Frau Amrain scraped together sufficient money to pay her husband's creditors and then took the quarry business into her capable hands. When the story opens, Amrain has departed, but Keller has a

retrospective hit at him in the description of how he had strutted about the town, a red leather letter-case under his arm and swinging an elegant walking stick. He had paid perfunctory visits to the quarry, soon returning to Seldwyla to air his lazy self-importance. Evidently a superb case for the exhibition of Frau Amrain's educationary talents! But she failed in this and was thus left alone with her three sons to bring up. The two elder boys are very slightly drawn, it is on Fritz, the youngest, that our attention is directed. One evening, the children are in bed and Frau Amrain is sitting up studying her ledgers when the foreman of the works comes to visit her. He is an able man and serves her interests well, but he has recently pressed her to obtain a divorce and she knows that this advice is dictated by passion for her. That evening, when he enters the room, she sees he has been drinking and his eyes are blazing with desire. He reports the usual day's business, then he seizes her hands and tries to draw her to him, while he whispers that so beautiful and vigorous a woman must enjoy her life and liberty. She endeavours to evade him, telling him vehemently she will have nothing to do with him. She realises that his desire of her is mixed with the love of her money. He struggles with her and she is almost vanquished, when a small white figure appears in the doorway with a cry of: "Mother mother, there is a thief in the house!" It is Fritz, her youngest son. "He was like a little St. George. His white nightshirt was like a mediæval tunic and the curtain rod, which he was waving over his head, might have been a knight's spear!" The mother gathers him up, a deep blush on her cheeks. She reassures him, it is only Florian the foreman, who has come to talk business with her, but the child, who is now sobbing, refuses to be comforted. With a scornful smile Frau Amrain, her son clasped in her arms, dismisses the discomfited foreman, who would gladly have boxed the little fellow's ears! He goes ruefully away, and Frau Amrain bolts the door behind him and then stands gazing into the child's eyes. She carries Fritz into the adjoining room and lays him in his white bed. She looks long at her other two sons who are sleeping soundly. From this hour, her life and Fritzchen's are bound close together.

The years pass, the two elder boys are apprenticed to other trades, but Fritz remains with his mother and works in the quarry. She leaves him full liberty, smiling humorously at his youthful peccadilloes, but reproving him sharply if he lies or makes a fool of himself. There is a whimsical scene where the boy dresses up in his mother's best clothes and goes to a wedding at the inn. She follows him, mixes with the guests, laughs and talks with the groups of young people; then she beckons Fritz to her and whispers to him that she is going home. He declares he will accompany her. She thanks him, but remarks coolly that had she wished to be escorted by a woman, she could have brought the cook with her; he will do her the favour to go home and change into more becoming garments. Now thoroughly ashamed of himself and realising he is cutting a ridiculous figure, he hurries off, stumbling over the long silk skirts. He changes his clothes quickly and returns to the inn. To his relief his mother says nothing on the way home. When they are in the house, she takes the gown he has just worn and tears it into bits, saying she can never wear it again. Fritz asks why and she answers she could never wear a dress in which her son has paraded among silly and improper women, looking for all the world like one of them. She begins to weep and orders him to leave her and go to bed. Certainly, Frau Regel Amrain was a shrewd woman and one might even have loved her, had she not always been so righteous and didactic!

Fritz is swept into politics. He goes off with his comrades on one of those abortive political crusades which the youth of Switzerland indulged in during 1844 and 1845. This is a reminiscence of Keller's boyhood, for he too went on one of these "Freischarenzüge", semi-political, semi-religious expeditions wherein the Protestant republicans attacked their conservative Catholic countrymen. But Keller's exploit was not very serious; and after one Sunday of brandishing ancient muskets and inveighing against Jesuits and tyrants, he and his compeers retired nonplussed by the peasants, who yelled at the disturbers of their Sunday tranquillity, backing up their injunctions to be gone by threatening gestures

with scythes, sickles and hatchets. Fritz Amrain's affair goes further, it is a regular fray, hard blows are exchanged and the republican youths are taken prisoner and disarmed by the angry peasantry. Frau Amrain suffers an agony of suspense while her Fritz is out on this adventure, but when she hears he and his friends are safely in jail and will neither be shot nor hung, but let off with a fine, the Government needing money just then more than vengeance, she decides to allow him a taste of prison fare and discomfort for several days, as the best method of inculcating wisdom.

Fritz, cured of political zeal, settles down, marries, manages the quarry, and it looks as tho' Frau Amrain's educational mission in life were finished, but Fritz falls into the opposite extreme in his political mentality and holds aloof even from the municipal elections. Off marches Frau Amrain to the quarry and upbraids her son for his remissness. Was there ever such a woman? Her energy and conscientiousness are certainly admirable, yet oh! what a plague of a woman! Fritz holds his own for a time, but righteousness is ever master of dialectics and, after a long argument, he gives in and goes dutifully to register his vote. He finds that the Seldwyla voters have been as remiss as he, and the city affairs have fallen into unscrupulous hands. Fritz, together with some peasants, elects more fitting representatives. That evening when he reaches home, his mother greets him with the news of his father's return. And now the father's education is taken in hand by Frau Regel Amrain and her youngest son. The father is informed that his debts have been paid, he is told he will be allowed no hand in the active management of the quarry, but he may take a modest part if he promises to work seriously under his wife's and youngest son's directions. At first, Herr Amrain weeps bitterly, but his righteous wife having arranged all for his comfort, sits down beside him and knits peacefully. What they said to one another no one knows, but finally Amrain yields to reason and submits himself to be educated by his wife and son. This remarkable schooling does not last long however, and the old man is soon capable of undertaking a fair share in the management. They

all live happily together and even Fritz's numerous offspring are carefully educated by Frau Amrain. There is never a mention of Fritz's wife, save that he had married her, but we presume she must have continued to be an inmate of the Amrain household, as otherwise even Frau Amrain might have found it difficult to have had grandchildren.

The end of the story tells how when this righteous woman dies she seemed to lie proudly even in death, and there was never so long a woman's coffin carried to the Seldwyla churchyard as that of Frau Regula Amrain.

This pedagogic story would be unbearable were it not full of Keller's dry humour and unlike any story we have read.

— The next study in the People of Seldwyla is "The three righteous Comb-Cutters." It was Richard Wagner's favourite among Keller's stories, probably he was attracted by a similarity in its humour to the "Meistersinger of Nürnberg." It is interesting to observe how with Keller's work we are so often reminded of a picture or of something we have seen represented on the stage. Modern critics distinguish between acoustic and optical authors, between those who instinctively employ the power of sound to enforce their meaning, and those whose spontaneous mode of expression appeals to the eye. Keller belonged to the latter class. We see his scenes to the minutest detail, we know his personages by sight, but we are seldom haunted by the cadence of his words. Keller's mind was a mirror, not an Eolian harp. For this reason his poems, however beautiful in thought, sometimes technically excellent, are lacking in melody, are often even actually unmusical. In his instinctive striving for graphic expression, we have the secret of his constant preoccupation with painting and drama. By painting he endeavoured to delineate the scenes he perceived so vividly in his thought; and by drama he hoped to see the inmates of his mind in bodily presentment upon the theatre's boards. Both these ambitions were doomed to failure, because the technic of each was alien to his genius, which stubbornly demanded the medium of word-painting in detailed narrative. One cause of

his defeat in drama writing was his deficiency in talent for dialogue. In the fragment of his unfinished drama "Therese" the dialogue is disastrously comic. Feeble to the bourne of absurdity, one can scarcely believe it has been written by a grown man; it reminds one of those crude compositions which emanate from an ambitious schoolgirl's pen. How unwillingly one records the failure of a beloved genius! How one wishes a wise hand had committed "Therese" to the fire!

With relief we return to Keller's masterpieces. The "Three righteous Comb-cutters" is one of the finest as it is one of the most characteristic of these. A sentence in Pierre Bayle's "Dictionnaire historique et critique" had amused Keller's ironical sense ever since he had read the works of Bayle at Heidelberg. Ludwig Feuerbach's monograph on Bayle was one of the famous books of that day and Keller, who read most things, was led thereby to study Pierre Bayle. The sentence: "Un état de justes ne saurait subsister" struck like a flash light upon Keller's knowledge of small towns with their self-righteous, narrow-minded inhabitants, and out of his humorous comprehension of the smug egotism and the ugliness of such souls, sprang one of the greatest humorous stories of the world: "Die drei gerechten Kammacher." It is very high comedy and only an author whose speenless, if unrelenting, appraisal of human nature was tempered with pity, could have prevented it from degenerating into a farce. The opening sentences of the "Comb-cutters" explain Keller's conception of the word "gerecht" (righteous); we can translate it best by the Scottish idiom "unco guid." He says: "such persons would willingly omit from the Lord's Prayer the words: "forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us," for they consider themselves incapable of trespassing. They do not knock over lanterns, but neither do they light any." Keller is careful to avoid the error of calling these persons hypocrites; he knew that hypocrites are made of subtler stuff.

A Seldwyla master comb-maker employed three journeymen comb-cutters: Jobst a Saxon, Fridolin a Bavarian and Dietrich

a Swabian. They were stolid, sober, industrious fellows whose only thought was gain. Jobst had been in his master's employ for six years and his secret plan was, by hard work and miserly saving, to scrape together enough to buy his master out and become owner of the combcuttery. Fridolin and Dietrich, comparative newcomers in Seldwyla, were bitten with the same notion, and these three, who were seldom parted for an hour, being even expected to share the same bed, vied with one another in work and parsimony, brooding the while over their cherished project. Their scanty linen was washed by the mother of Züs Bünzelin. Züs' father had bequeathed her a tidy sum to which she added substantially by ironing fine linen and by giving medical treatment to the ladies of Seldwyla. A pretendant to her hand, a surgeon barber, had imparted to her the art of blood letting, and when he had broken off his engagement, in lieu of payment of a small debt, he had left her a lancet wherewith she earned many an honest penny. This desirable heiress had sparse red hair and watery blue eyes, but her wealth and her pretentious talk had captivated a bashful bookbinder, whose suit she, however, had rejected as he was nine years her junior and as poor as a mouse; but she still frequently alluded to him as "my Emmanuel, the only one on earth who has understood me!" Incidentally, his name was Veit, but Emmanuel sounded more romantic. Dietrich the Swabian, the latest comer of the journeyman-cutters conceived the idea of marrying Züs. This lady had already cast her eye upon the three combcutters, deeming them righteous and steady men, and when, during his visits to fetch his clean linen, Dietrich commenced to flatter and cajole her, she lent him a willing ear and even showed him her savings-bank book. Jobst and Fridolin soon discovered their younger comrade's design and they were consumed with fury and astonishment. Dietrich, like all inventors, was immediately pursued by imitators and, before the week was out, Züs had three admirers. She decided to favour whosoever succeeded in acquiring the combcuttery. She believed Dietrich to be out of the running, as she reckoned he could only achieve his object thro' her money, whereas

she surmised that the other two had savings. It was a hard time for the three journeymen, for into their humdrum lives came jealousy, anxiety and hope. They laboured early and late. They hoarded their gains more slavishly than ever, they became thin and haggard, they could not even keep still in their bed! They, who usually lay like three wooden dolls stiffly side by side, now grew restless, they fidgetted—they tossed—and it ended in nocturnal combats. Then one morning, the crushing blow was dealt to the three workers: alack! they had been too industrious, they had laboured all too well for their master! He had waxed indolent in his prosperity, and with indolence had come extravagance, with extravagance debt had overtaken him. And therefore he had decided to reduce his establishment—two of his journeymen must leave. They implored and wept in vain. The master was adamant, altho' he assured them of his esteem, even of his affection. He said they could settle which of them should depart, but two must leave. In chorus they begged him to keep them at least two months—or even four weeks. But the master, knowing on what they speculated, jeered at them. He then proposed a way out of the quandary: as they could not decide who was to remain, he suggested they should pack their knapsacks and, on the following sunday morning, should race each other, baggage aback, to the combcuttery. Who won should remain. The luckless men fell at his feet and entreated him to remit his sentence, but he was obdurate. Suddenly Dietrich jumped up and bolted out of the house down the street to the laundry, and immediately the other two leapt after him. Like three lunatics they burst into the presence of Züs Bünzlin and breathlessly, in chorus, told their sorry tale. The shrewd virgin promptly perceived her advantage in the master's device, and, after listening to one of her most sententious homilies, the journeymen consented to the ordeal by speed. Züs Bünzlin's speeches are deliciously comic, a glorious jumble of her conceit and her smattering of various knowledges: geography and popular literature, the Bible and Schiller.

All that day, the combcutters ran up and down between the workshop and the laundry. When one of them started off, the other two were sure to rush after him. They were burning with suspicion of each other and distraught with terror each for himself. That evening the trio, exhausted by the unwonted activity, retired early to bed. Now comes the celebrated scene with the bug. Fridolin and Dietrich were still slumbering, when Jobst awoke. His eyes wandered round the familiar room. It was dingy and delapidated, but it seemed to him a veritable paradise now that he would probably have to leave it for ever. There were memories for him of many a departed good comrade: here on the wall was a greasy stain where one had been wont to lean his head; there was a rusty nail where another had hung his tobacco pipe. What good fellows they had been! And they had gone their way harmlessly, whereas these, who lay in bed beside him, had brought him nothing but trouble! Last autumn, in the good old days, he had found a pot of sky blue paint and had daubed it over the wall near the bed. The paint brush bristles had fallen out, had stuck on the wall and made devisions like the lines of a map. There were little lumps and bumps in the uneven paint, Jobst imagined them to look like villages and hillocks. Suddenly, as his sleep-dazed eyes contemplated these well known bumps, he noticed that one of the hillocks had disappeared leaving a small bare spot on the wall—the light blue hillock was moving slowly away. Jobst sat up in bed horror struck. And then he saw it was a bug, a light blue bug crawling away! A bug he had inadvertently painted over last autumn and which the warmth of spring had revived, and now it was moving on—moving on—moving on—as he, Jobst, would soon be doing too.

Towards midday, the three combcutters assembled before Züs Bünzlin's door, their baggage on their backs and each with a small wheelbarrow strapped on his knapsack in case an unkind Fate should really send him tramping. Züs appeared in the doorway. She was highly elegant in an enormous hat with yellow ribbons, a pink flowered cotton dress elaborately trimmed and a black velvet tippet fastened by a

pinchbeck buckle. She wore red morocco leather shoes ornamented with fringes and she carried a large green silk reticule filled with dried pears and plums. She hoisted a sunshade which was embellished at the point by a carved ivory lyre, and she wore at her breast her locket with the funeral urn worked in hair, and her handsome gold brooch. Her hands were genteelly encased in white knitted mittens. This attire, which suggested wealth as well as excellent taste, and the delicious spring weather roused feelings in the combcutters' hearts which verily resembled love.

They repaired to a shady spot beyond the town-wall and sat down beneath a lime-tree. Züs opened her reticule and presented her suitors with handfuls of dried pears and plums to refresh them and, while they sucked these delicacies, she delivered an extremely impressive harangue treating chiefly of her own merits, of her modesty, learning, thrift and general desirability. The combcutters grew more and more enflamed with the idea of owning such a marvellous wife. This marital ardour, the noontide heat and the dried fruit produced so painful a dryness in their righteous throats, that at length Jobst and Fridolin slipped away to a neighbouring brook to quench their thirst. Not so the wily Swabian, Dietrich. He carried a bottle of cherry brandy mixed with water, and when his brother journeymen went to drink at the brook, he drew it from his pocket and offered it to the chaste maiden, who drank half its contents at one draught. She looked at him after this with such soft eyes that he could not refrain from grasping her hand and delicately kissing her finger tips. She punished him by tapping him gently on the lips and he playfully pretended to snap at her fingers, making a grimace like a smiling carp, which was dangerously fascinating. Züs's smirk was false and amiable, Dietrich's grin was sly and honied. They sat upon the ground opposite each other and tapped one another's feet with their toes; then Züs leaned forward and patted him on the shoulder and Dietrich was just going to continue this coy game when the others returned from the brook. The cold water on the top of the plums was making them feel sufficiently uncomfortable and the sight

of Züs and Dietrich in such playful converse completed their misery; but Züs, smiling archly, called them to her. She gave Dietrich one hand, Jobst the other and she consoled Fridolin by pattering her foot against his, while she nodded and smiled to each in turn. After a moment she arose majestically and told them the time had come for the fateful race. Up sprang the three righteous suitors, they blew out their cheeks, wiped the sweat from their honest brows, peered anxiously about them, breathed heavily and sighed loudly; and the fair Züs was so much moved that she wept, so touched by their distress that she gave them more dried fruit. Then Jobst, rubbing his belly ruefully, exclaimed: "Well, if it has to be, then let it be!" He seized his knapsack and started off at an ambling run and Fridolin followed him. Dietrich however lingered beside the enchantress as though he could not, really could not tear himself away from such beauty, and she was so agitated that she was obliged to lean upon his arm.

"Oh!" she murmured, "it is indeed sweet to have a staff to lean upon! Even if one is gifted with great gifts, it is beautiful to rest upon a trusty friend's arm!" And Dietrich was so affected that he dug his elbow into her ribs.

"Oh! Dietrich, dear Dietrich! I am often very lonely," she cooed, pressing herself against him. But he observed that his fellow runners had gained a prodigious start and he made as though he would be off, but she held him back.

"The devil and all!" he cried, "let me go, Miss!"

"No, no, you must not leave me, I am feeling sick," she wailed.

"Sick or not sick, I'm off!" he retorted and wrenched his arm from her grasp. He ran a short distance, then paused, for he saw the other racers far down the hill. He looked back and saw that Züs, standing at the edge of the wood, was beckoning to him. This he could not resist and he hastened towards her. She went on beneath the trees beckoning gracefully, for she meant to detain him in order that the race should be finished without him and then he would be obliged to leave Seldwyla in disgrace. But the Swabian, who had

been the first to plan the wooing of Züs, was inspired by another brilliant idea. He strode after her into the wood and began to woo her in fiery words. Never had any combcutter been so ardent or so eloquent. Züs grew weaker and weaker— "and so Dietrich vanquished her in every way." She had lured him into the coppice meaning to betray him by hindering him from taking his chance in the race, and behold! she was conquered by her intended victim. This was not because she was an amorous damsel, but because she could not see farther than her own nose, although she thought herself so mighty clever. The charming pair exchanged a thousand kisses, swore eternal fidelity and decided to marry whatever might befall.

Meanwhile, in the town the citizens were all out watching for the racers, the spiteful master-combcutter having spread the news of the ordeal by speed. Every window was crammed, every door was blocked with observers, the streets were lined with spectators, the trees were full of urchins, the benches groaned under the weight of the onlookers. When the boys at the town-gate shouted that the racers were coming, a buzz of laughter went up. Jobst and Fridolin, dragging, their wheelbarrows, hove in sight. Both men were panting, sweating, gesticulating frantically. The crowd received them with mock encouragement, laughing until they were obliged to hold their sides. Then a small boy sprang upon Jobst's wheelbarrow. Jobst hit at the imp with his stick, yelling at him to get off, and this causing him to slacken his pace, Fridolin got past him. Then Jobst flung his stick between his opponent's legs and Fridolin fell flat on his face. Jobst, wheelbarrow, boy and all, endeavoured to dash on, but Fridolin snatched at his coat tails and brought him to the ground. They struggled and rolled, and rolled and struggled and sobbed, and the people were bent double with laughter. The unhappy journeymen rolled and struggled and cursed each other, and wept and always rolled on and on until they rolled past the combcuttery, rolled down the street and out at the other town-gate, followed by a crowd of men, women and children all rocking and staggering and weeping with laughter.

Then stealthily Züs and Dietrich appeared and hied them to the master-combmaker, to whom Züs gave half her savings-bank account; and when the laughing neighbours returned from the gate Züs was already owner of the cuttery and Dietrich was her betrothed lover.

Half dead with mortification Jobst and Fridolin lay exhausted in a hostelry where they had been carried by some compassionate souls, who had found them side by side fainting in a field beyond the wall, whither they had rolled together. The next day, Jobst hung himself on the tree under which they had all sat with the ravishing Züs, and Fridolin, who chanced to pass that way on his road to seek new work, was so terrified at the sight of Jobst's dead body that he fled, and it is rumoured became a good-for-nothing and never did an honest day's work again. So Dietrich remained the only righteous man of the trio and got the combcuttery to boot, but whether he enjoyed his prosperity is another matter, for Züs took all the credit to herself, ruled her husband with a rod of iron and believed and proclaimed herself to be the font of all the goodness and wisdom in the world.

↑ Spiegel the Cat, the only fairy story Keller wrote, is the last novelle in Volume I of "The People of Seldwyla." Spiegel belongs to an ancient Seldwyla spinster of the middle-ages. His life is one long pampered delight until this old lady dies. Her heirs enter into a lawsuit over the inheritance and shut up the house, and Spiegel is left to starve. He grows thin, his erstwhile glossy coat is dull and rough, the town urchins chase him, set the curs after him, throw stones at him. One day, he sits blinking miserably at the sun, when Pineiss, the magician, espies him. He requires cats' grease to brew some magic potion and so he offers Spiegel a life of luxury and rich food till the next full moon, when Spiegel must pay the price with his well fattened body. The contract is duly written and signed and Spiegel begins his life of greed, but when he notices he is growing plump, the fear of death restrains him, he rejects the delicious morsels the wizzard daily sets before him, and goes a'hunting on the roofs for the sake of his figure. The first night he encounters a beautiful, white cat and now

love reduces his figure to such an extent that when, after many amorous nights, he is recaptured by Pineiss he is a pitiable, meagre, lovetorn cat. The magician locks him into a room and only opens the door to tempt him with irresistible viands. Once more Spiegel is led into mortal danger by his overpowering greed. He soon grows so plump that the magician decides he can obtain sufficient grease off him and comes with his sharp knife to cut him into bits, but the crafty Spiegel begins lamenting that he must perish without fulfilling his defunct mistress's behest concerning the treasure. "Treasure!" cries Pineiss, "what treasure?" Spiegel tells him a long yarn (again one of Keller's favourite devices of interpolating a story within a story), a whole romance does Spiegel tell of how his mistress when young and beautiful was wooed by a hundred suitors, but she mistrusted them all. Finally she set a test to a favoured lover by pretending she had lost her fortune and was dying of love for a poor knight. The noble youth sold his patrimony and, in a bag of gold, gave it all to her to secure her happiness with his rival. She made him promise to come to the wedding, meaning, of course, to reward him then by telling him he was the happy bridegroom. He promised but never came. She waited long and then a message was brought her that her lover had broken his promise because he could not face the sight of her as another's bride. He had become a soldier and had fallen in battle. The lady, heart-broken, hid the ill-omened gold and turned into a sorrowful old maid. Before she died she told Spiegel where the hidden treasure lay and she commanded him to seek out a beautiful girl and an honest, prudent man and to give them the treasure, thus endowing a happy marriage.

Pineiss fastens a cord round Spiegel's neck and orders him to lead the way to the treasure's hiding-place. Spiegel takes him to a well in his former mistress's garden and the magician sees the gold glittering at the bottom of the water. But Spiegel informs him there is a curse on any treasure seeker who robs the well; the gold can only be enjoyed if Spiegel fulfils the conditions imposed by the old lady. Spiegel promises to provide the handsome wife and to fish up the

treasure if Pineiss releases his neck from the cord and gives him the contract concerning the cat's grease. He argues so convincingly that Pineiss sets him free and hands over the contract, which Spiegel eats up at once as the surest way of putting it beyond the magician's reach! Then Spiegel makes Pineiss a low bow and goes off to fulfil his promise.

Opposite the magician's house dwells a pious hideous spinster, who hates the wizzard, and he loathes her. Spiegel knows it is only by day she is so pious, at night she turns into a beautiful wicked witch and flies naked out of the chimney on a broom stick! The keeper of the witch's chimney is an owl, a poor creature she has laid under a spell. This owl is a friend of Spiegel's. He hastens to him and confides his plan: he will be revenged on the magician and obtain the owl's freedom, all at one stroke. He only needs a large, strong net. The owl, who knows where to procure one, flies away and soon brings it. They set their trap in the chimney and when the witch comes up, she is quickly entangled in the net. She struggles and struggles, but she cannot escape. First they force her to break the spell she has cast over the owl; then they make her swear to play into their hands and marry the magician.

The next morning, Spiegel shows Pineiss a beautiful maiden, in rags and tatters, begging on the roadside. Pineiss instantly falls in love with her and Spiegel gives him the bag of gold telling them they shall marry and be happy forever. Spiegel remarks that: "even beauty must be gilded!" There is a marriage supper, attended by Spiegel and the owl, and the magician declares Herr Spiegel to be a right honest cat. He bows his two guests out of the house and rushes back to his lovely young bride, but, alack!, he finds the hideous, aged spinster awaiting him! Such is Spiegel's revenge, and this old, old story is the origin of the Seldwyla saying: "He has bought the cat's grease," which means that someone has made a very bad bargain.

It is a gloomy fairy tale. Our gay old Puss in Boots is very different to the artful greedy Spiegel! Gottfried Keller did not write for children, and the Brothers Grimm and kindly

Monsieur Perrault thought of a fairy story far otherwise. But the ancient tale of Reinecke Fuchs, which Goethe revived, is equally sombre and human. Certainly, Keller's little masterpiece takes high rank among the classical cat stories, and Spiegel remains in our memory with Scheffel's wise and epic cat, Hiddigeigei, in the "Trompeter von Säckingen" and with "Puss in Boots."

CHAPTER IV.

Zürich. Richard Wagner. Apotheker von Chamounix. Das Fähnlein der sieben Aufrechten. Political situation in Switzerland. Neuchâtel. The supper to Lassalle. Keller Staatsschreiber of Zürich. The sieben Legenden. Eugenia. The Virgin and the Devil. The Virgin Knight. The Madonna and the Nun. The wicked Saint Vitalis. Dorothea's Basket. The little Legend of the Dance.

Keller's life in Zürich during the next few years was uneventful. He wrote very little. He rejoiced in the beauty of his beloved country and was more or less contented for a time, but he found his relatives and old friends changed, as all men do when they themselves have developed, have "grown out" of the old friends. Can they have been so dull, so narrow-minded, so wearily uninteresting, in those old days when we thought them so thrilling? We, most of us, have been forced to ask ourselves this dismal question. And meanwhile, the old friends are grieving that we have grown so harsh and distant, so aloof from them in our newly garnered experience. Experiences doubtless undesirable—perhaps immoral—certainly deleterious—they say! And we pay our piteous debt of affection to the old friends, until their accursed attitude of disapproval blocks the way. We think them changed, they know we are—and the tears turn bitter in our hearts—and theirs—and friendship drowns.

But Keller found new friends in Zürich and an intellectually rich life. The centre of the Zürich artistic world was the Wesendonck house, where, among others, Keller met Richard Wagner. The miserable drama with Wagner's first wife, Minna, was

over and the Mathilde Wesendonck episode was playing. Liszt and Princess Wittgenstein visited Zürich, Robert Franz and Hans von Bülow with his wife, Cosima, lingered there, and Gottfried Keller's critical eyes watched and appraised them in the Wesendonck salon. Fanny Lewald, the affected authoress and her lover, the writer Adolf Stahr, were among the Wesendonck guests; these two Keller hated, with his usual virulence against those who displeased him, and he called them collectively: "that four-legged two-sexed ink-animal." Keller is described as sitting silent through a whole evening, "dumbly rude, as only he could be," while Fanny Lewald and Stahr were present.

It is amusing to read Richard Wagner's opinion of Keller and Keller's remarks on Wagner. Keller writes to Ludmilla Assing: "Wagner, since Liszt came, is more than ever wrong-headed and conceited, for everyone backs him up and applauds him in his follies. The Princess Wittgenstein has gathered all the notorieties of Zürich around her, she writes them long letters and presents everybody with plaster casts of Liszt's head."

And Wagner writes of Keller: "he occasionally says something witty, but he blurts it out so noisily that you might imagine it was a sack of potatoes being emptied onto the drawing-room floor!" Wagner always speaks rather condescendingly about Keller, laughing at his awkwardness and saying one had the feeling his chief preoccupation was how he would manage to escape from any social gathering where he happened to be. He says that tho' Keller's work has the merit of originality, it is more as a promise of development than a real achievement. Therefore Wagner was always questioning Keller as to what he intended to write next, which Keller answered by recounting half a dozen plans, but Wagner remarks acidly that they remained plans. Later, he seems to have changed his opinion, for there is a letter of his stepdaughter's, in answer to Keller's condolence on Wagner's death, wherein we may read that Keller's "charming, touching characters, soulful vision and deep thoughts had profoundly touched Wagner."

Six years went past. Keller's purse was but ill-filled;

he occasionally earned small sums from newspaper articles, otherwise he lived upon his mother's meagre fortune and the earnings of his sister Regula, who was celebrated in Zürich for her ironing. Keller assured his friends that he was working hard, but he produced little, save poems for national festivals. Intermittently he tinkered at the "Apotheker von Chamounix," but most of this unpleasant poem was completed before he left Berlin. It is regrettable that the "Apotheker" did not remain one of those unfulfilled plans of which Wagner spoke, for only those who love Keller blindly, or those who never venture to utter their thought (if they have one) concerning a famous writer's work, can pretend that the "Apotheker" is a great poem. It is a satire on Heine's "Romancero" and was intended as an attack on the romantic poets. It apes Heine's mannerisms, but the haunting laughter, fraught with tears, the charm and grace of Heine's wayward genius is lacking in Keller's laborious satire. There is spite enough in it, but it is not amusing spite. It makes one angry with Keller, it is unworthy of his genius. Other poets tried their hands at Heine parodies. The best known is Müller von Königswinter's "Die Höllenfahrt von Heinrich Heine." It is a poor performance and only achieves a grotesque resemblance when parodying certain Heine pages which are undoubtedly dirty, wherein Müller succeeds in outdoing Heine. Gottfried Keller of course did not stoop to such methods. The "Apotheker" was to have appeared in 1854, but Heinrich Heine lay dying in slow agony, and Keller's friends, pleading it would be heartless to publish the satire just then, Keller refrained. Some Keller's admirers contend that had the "Apotheker" appeared at that date, it would have ranked high in satirical literature, that its point was only missed by the fact that it was published too late for the reading world to be interested. Keller intended to publish it immediately after Heine's death, but Müller von Königswinter's coarse doggerel and several other mediocre Heine parodies came out, and he again laid the "Apotheker" by. Thus it was only in 1882 that a few verses appeared in a magazine and in 1883 it was included in Keller's Collected Poems.

The only novelle produced during those six Zürich years was "Das Fähnlein der Sieben Aufrechten," which appeared in 1861, shortly before Keller's election as Staatsschreiber. It is so specifically Swiss that its appeal is more limited than that of Gottfried Keller's other stories and some readers have voted it dull. It is however full of character and sober humour and gives us a fine picture of the Switzerland of the mid-nineteenth century. French critics have been severe to the "Sieben Aufrechten," but possibly English readers will understand it better, finding in it much of that dry yet pawky local humour which we appreciate in Barrie, or in Ian Maclaren's Scottish books. Indeed, there is often a likeness in the Swiss and lowland Scotch mentality. The "Upright Ones" are seven old cronies who, having played their parts in local politics as young men, have founded an informal republican society for themselves under the motto "Freedom in Friendship." For years these worthies have met regularly to discuss politics over their wine of an evening. Their thoughts still circle round revolt against Jesuits, papistry and foreign influence and, regardless that these bogies have long been removed, they continue to inveigh against them! While the "Seven" enjoy their retrospective arguments, the younger generation goes the way that youth must always go, despite politics and old men's talk. Hediger, the shoemaker, the poorest of the seven friends, has a son, Karl; Frymann, the well-to-do carpenter has a daughter, Hermione, and these two have fallen in love with each other. The scene on the river when at night the lovers meet, each in their own boat, is an idyl, fresh and young as are all Keller's love scenes.

Frymann wishes for a wealthy son-in-law, and Hediger is too proud to countenance his son's wooing of the heiress against his old friend's will. Besides, the old fellows are agreed that kinship destroys friendship, and so the lovers are ordered to forget each other.

The "Seven" plan to attend the Aarau festival which, like most national Swiss festivals, will consist of a procession of guilds with banners, patriotic speeches, a rifle competition and a people's banquet. The "Seven" decide to have a banner for their society and to present prizes for the shooting match.

Frymann is elected to be their spokesman. The Master Carpenter is appalled at this prospect, for tho' he is profuse of words among his friends, he is a dumb man in public. The accounts of the gifts the "Upright Ones" propose to offer as prizes; of Frymann's draft of his oration, made up of tirades against Jesuits and superannuated politics; of Karl's stratagem to discomfit the wealthy suitor whom Frymann favours as future son-in-law, are all brilliant specimens of Keller's humour.

The description of the national festival is full of colour. When the "Seven" approach the meeting place, Frymann, who carries their banner, is overwhelmed with terror at the idea of speaking before a large audience, and the old men take refuge in an inn to consult. Karl finds them there and offers to be their spokesman, which they accept eagerly. He marches them to the platform before which the orator of each guild has to speak. Karl makes a fine speech and is applauded to the echo. Then, seeing Hermione among the onlookers, he carries her off to the rifle range, where, inspired by her faith in him, he shoots twenty-five shots without once missing the mark and wins a prize cup. At the banquet he defeats a brawny peasant in a trial of strength, and all this so impresses old Frymann with Karl's cleverness and general excellence, that he there and then accepts him as his son-in-law, and the lovers are betrothed among the plaudits of the company. It is a simple story, but it lives because the characters are so forcefully drawn and the descriptions so vivid. We feel we have attended the Aarau festival, and are well acquainted with the "Upright Ones." Karl, the good young man, is a little tiresome in his excellence and Hermione is the only one of Keller's women who is conventional. The novelle is chiefly interesting as a picture of Swiss life among the people. It is humorous, when one knows Switzerland, to reflect that thousands of travellers believe it to be a country of hotels, peopled with hotel keepers, guides for mountain-climbing and overdressed, international ninnies, varying their search for amusement by a change of air! While, in truth, the Swiss national life goes on aloof and a little scornful; the patrician families exclusive and anti-foreign; the middle classes busy and sober; the system of

government nearer the ideal of republicanism than any other in the world. There have been changes since Gottfried Keller wrote the "Seven Upright Ones," but the national life, above all the mentality of German Switzerland, is still akin to Keller's work.

Switzerland was in the throes of political turmoil when Keller arrived in Zürich. The last vestige of foreign power in Switzerland was Prussia's possession of Neuchâtel, which had come about at the settlement of the dispute over the Orange inheritance. With the extinction of the Counts of Neuchâtel, the Dukedom of Neuchâtel had passed to the House of Châlons and thence by inheritance to the Orléans Longuevilles. In 1707, the Longuevilles being extinct, no less than fifteen pretendants laid claim to the Dukedom of Neuchâtel. The foremost of these was Frederic I, King of Prussia, whose claim rested on the rights of his mother, Louise Henriette of Orange, the Great Elector's first wife. The Orange-Nassau pretention was based on the marriage into the House of Nassau, in the XVI century, of a sister of the last Duke of Châlons. When William III of Orange, King of England, died without issue in 1702 the various heirships of the House of Orange-Nassau were hotly disputed, and in 1707 the Neuchâtel Dukedom, at the extinction of the Longuevilles, was added to the coveted territories. Frederick of Prussia's claim was at least as good as any other and the French catholic Dukes having always been unpopular in protestant Neuchâtel, the Dukedom was adjudged to Prussia. For some hundred years, Prussian Neuchâtel had not disturbed the Swiss, but the fact that the Dukedom as a Canton formed part of the Confederate States, gradually grew irksome and quarrels arose. In 1856, a progressive republican party in Neuchâtel endeavoured to throw off the Prussian yoke. The malcontents were, of course, supported by the rest of Switzerland, but Frederick William IV of Prussia refused to be ousted. The Neuchâtel royalists, headed by Count Pourtalès, seized the Castle and arrested the Swiss administrators, whereupon the Swiss government despatched a strong body of troops who delivered the imprisoned administrators and incarcerated the royalist leaders in their stead. Prussia protested that

the Swiss could not legally arrest Prussian subjects for championing the cause of their rightful Duke-King. The Swiss replied that if the Duke-King would relinquish his suzerainty over Neuchâtel, his champions would be released, if not they would be brought to trial as rebels. Frederick William refused and threatened to declare war. Switzerland mobilized. Then France stepped in at the eleventh hour and proposed a compromise: Switzerland should quash the trial of the royalists and set them free, Frederick William should waive his claims on Neuchâtel. It was the same proposal as Switzerland had made at first but now Prussia consented to negotiate, and in May 1857 it was agreed that tho' the King of Prussia retained the title of Duke, he definitely renounced any further claims on Neuchâtel.

The Prussian war scare was hardly over, when a fresh menace to peace loomed on the horizon. At the congress of Vienna the right had been accorded to Switzerland to occupy North Savoy in the event of war between Austria and France. In 1859 Napoleon III assisted his ally Victor Emmanuel of Savoy in wresting Lombardy from Austria, and in return Victor Emmanuel ceded Savoy and Nice to France. The Swiss Government protested and Napoleon III consented to a People's Referendum in Savoy. Under the pressure of the French officials the Savoyans voted for France. Northern Savoy announced that it would remain with the rest of the province and, in March 1860, the formalities concluded, the whole of Savoy became French. Once more Switzerland was alight with the war-spirit, but it flickered out before a breeze of inner political excitement, the Cantons were quarrelling with the Bernese Government; calvinists and catholics were denouncing each other as usual, the republicans were striving against the reactionaries.

War rumours and local politics busied Gottfried Keller's thoughts to the exclusion of literary matters and he continued to live in his mother's house, sinking deeper and deeper into debt. His partisans were perplexed and distressed. It was difficult for them to understand how a man of his genius, who had taken literature as his sole profession, could remain unproductive so long. They began to distrust his power again.

The mentally unproductive invariably expect a creative brain to turn out masterpieces with the comfortable regularity of a baker baking rolls. Industrious talent can complete meritorious books almost at will, but genius is governed by more uncontrollable forces. This obviously does not imply that it is indolent, but simply that its mental processes are infinitely complex. The psychological writer, Möbius, elaborated an interesting theory of the periodicity of genius. He proved that the harvests of Goethe's thought were reaped on an average of every seven years and coincided with the recurrence in his heart of a passion for a woman. But at best these theorisings are attempts to explain what no one has ever explained: the flame of inspiration in the soul of a genius. The secret is locked deep in the subconscious and "who may behold a god against his will, whether going to or fro?" *

Gottfried Keller's mentality was probably ruled by some such law of periodicity, but it is impossible, in his case, to trace the amorous influence as a spur to literary creation; for although the bulk of his life's work was conceived in the Berlin years, it was not written until many years later. After all, the impetus to write is as much a part of inspiration as the thought. Of course it is possible that the effect of Keller's unhappy love for Johanna Kapp in Heidelberg, and his equally unfortunate passion for Betty Tendering in Berlin, may have stirred the well of his inspiration, but outwardly both love affairs appeared to be hinderances to his work.

It was natural for Keller's Zürich friends to be disappointed in him. They saw him roaming dreamily about the town, drinking hard at night in the taverns; sitting, morose and sullen, in the Wesendonck salon and in the few friends' houses he frequented; or bursting out into fits of anger on little or no provocation, storms of rage which were, often erroneously, put down to alcoholism. And never a book to justify his behaviour! He lived on in his mother's house, his sister Regula worked early and late at her ironing and he produced an occasional poem or a short newspaper article.

* Homer's *Odyssey* X. (Butcher's prose translation.)

Then the tide of fortune turned. His interest in politics had brought him into contact with many political men and when the post of Staatsschreiber of Zürich fell vacant in 1861, he was elected. His election called forth a volley of abuse in the press. What? this unsuccessful author, this drunkard, this debtor, this indolent, purposeless man without judicial training or recognized profession, this man to be awarded one of the most coveted, well salaried posts, high official rank and a state-paid, comfortable dwelling? Everyone predicted disaster. How could Keller, who had never worked regularly in his life, perform the onerous duties now assigned to him?

The evening before the new Herr Staatsschreiber was to be formally installed in office, there was a supper at the Swan Tavern in honour of Ferdinand Lassalle, the socialist agitator. Countess Hatzfeld, Lassalle's benefactress whom the world openly proclaimed to be his mistress, was present, in red Garibaldean blouse and huge crinoline. There also was the poet Herwegh, a number of republican journalists and politicians in scarlet Garibaldean shirts, and a Russian nihilist lady to whose charms, as well as her republicanism, the company paid boisterous court. Champagne flowed, cigar smoke rose in grey-blue clouds, laughter and loud voices resounded. And it was Sunday evening in sober, calvinistic Zürich! The newly elected Herr Staatsschreiber was of the party, sitting aloof and unresponsive as usual, but drinking steadily between the puffs of his big cigar. The nihilist lady reclined on the sofa smoking a cigar almost as large as Keller's, while Lassalle delivered brilliant tirades which were rapturously applauded. The night grew old, and still the company drank and sang and smoked and laughed. Then Lassalle began to play at table-turning and went on to show off his powers as a hypnotist, choosing as his victim the poet Herwegh, whom Keller loved and honoured. Hardly had Lassalle made a few passes over Herwegh's head, when Keller sprang up.

"This is too much of a good thing!" he bawled in Swiss dialect, "too much, too much, you pack of roisterers and swindlers!" He rushed at Lassalle brandishing a chair in those almost femininely delicate hands of his. Lassalle caught the chair-legs,

and the whole company started up in half drunken alarm. Everybody talked at once and the ladies burst into tears. Someone had sense enough to take Keller by the arm and lead him away, someone else guided him to the door of his house. Gradually the revellers trailed off to bed.

On the Monday morning at eight o'clock the Herr Staatsschreiber was expected at his office, the clerks and officials awaited him and several of his friends were there to see him installed in official life. Half past eight chimed out from the city clocks. The Herr Staatsschreiber had not appeared. Nine o'clock and still no sign of him! Impatience and consternation reigned at the bureau. At last, when the clocks were striking ten, a friend went to Keller's dwelling. The Herr Staatsschreiber was asleep in bed. After some time, his friends assembled and Keller, now dressed and very sulky, was soundly rated. He listened and curtly said that such unpunctuality should not occur again. It was put about the town that the Herr Staatsschreiber had been far from well and had thus been obliged to absent himself from his office, but that his indisposition had fortunately passed off. Many people laughed, some sneered, some rejoiced openly and prophesied that Keller's tenure of office would be brief. Speculation was rife too as to how Lassalle would punish Gottfried Keller for his onslaught. These kindly hopes were doomed to disappointment, Lassalle replied in answer to a letter of Keller's: "no one knows better than I that the gifts of Bacchus are strange, and so no one could be more ready than I am to pass over a little mood of wine!" And, in all the fifteen years that Keller served the state, he was never known to be unpunctual again.

It was now Keller's turn to offer his mother and sister a home, he had a good salary, and all was well, but for years the author was almost silent, only a few political newspaper articles and "occasional poems" appeared. He laboured steadily at his official work: town council affairs, inner politics, passport business, railway concessions; he constantly attended board meetings and committees; he was honorary secretary of innumerable societies. It was endless writing for Keller, and his crabbed, vigorous calligraphy is found in hundreds of volumes

of the state archives. He toiled constantly, sitting at his big writing-table, where he always insisted on having a vase of roses and where, as his fellow-officials complained, a cat was allowed to take her ease stretched out upon the official papers! If the cat chanced to be lying on a paper Keller needed, he usually refused to disturb her and another official document was worked, pending the beloved cat's voluntary removal from the first paper!

Gottfried Keller went thro' the drudgery of official life, suffering the numb ache of consorting with those to whom grey everyday business is the meaning of the world. He controlled his dreaming thoughts and struggled with practical matters, throwing his strength into precise daily work, and defeating the scoffers who will have it that a poet cannot compete with the average man when it comes to what they are pleased to term "real business." But what does such a victory cost a man like Gottfried Keller? That no one will ever know! No one will ever gauge the passion of revolt which surely burned in him. But one of his gifts which made it possible for him to endure the treadmill years was an unfailing sense of humour. "O Seelentrost Humor!" as he says in a line of that gruesome poem "Buried alive." Perhaps too he realised that this bitter schooling would teach him something he lacked: the self-discipline which is indispensable to the artist. Certainly, tho' among the papers found at his death there are many notes and situations sketched out, numerous fragments and half finished chapters, it evidently needed the habit of steady work to bring his masterpieces to completion. Of course, public opinion, that contrary demon which always demands the reverse of whatever a man does, grumbled that Gottfried Keller the author was submerged in the Herr Staatsschreiber, but as he writes in "Autobiographisches": "fortunately the official work was no half sinecure, and thus the two professions of writer and official could not be continued side by side, which would probably have spoilt both!" Genius, like wine of a good vintage, matures with keeping and Keller's mind was growing richer day by day. He still frequented the Wesendonck house and if any literary man passed thro' Zürich,

the Herr Staatsschreiber refreshed himself with long evenings of talk over many bottles of Rhine wine, which he called "that golden lion." He gave his mother and sister a home, but he was scarcely what is termed domesticated even then, his home was where he found congenial talk, and that was in the taverns where ideas and wine flowed freely.

One February midnight of 1864, the "little old mother" died suddenly, and the sorrow which the author had meted out to "Der Grüne Heinrich" fell upon Gottfried Keller himself, for he was not there to close those tired kind eyes. He said later, with his usual whimsical self-mockery, that he never went near a tavern for at least four weeks after his mother's death!

He lived on in the dark and cheerless official house alone with Regula, a gaunt old maid now, hard-working, sharp-tongued and parsimonious.

Then Gottfried Keller fell in love again and this time he was more courageous, he wooed and was accepted. His beloved was one Luise Scheidegger, a Langnau doctor's daughter. She was a charming, intelligent girl of three and twenty, but from the outset it was remarked that she had a tendency to melancholy. No sooner was she engaged to Keller, than evil tongues wagged. How could this young girl marry a man twenty years her senior; a man too who had notoriously neglected his mother and sister; a man who spent half the nights at the tavern, a drunkard and a man of dangerously socialistic opinions? All this was doubtless whispered to Luise Scheidegger and it probably preyed on her mind, but, as far as is known, she said no word to Keller. That summer she went to stay with relations in the country—and the news came to Zürich that she had drowned herself in a lake near-by.

So Keller lived on with his sister Regula in the official house, a lonely man indeed, taciturn and hard-working, immersed in an uncongenial profession. But the poet who had sung Switzerland's national song "O! mein Heimatland" could never be rated merely as an excellent, industrious official. The university students and the choirs of Zürich (Sängergesellschaften) decided to celebrate his fiftieth birthday. Keller knew nothing of this plan until it was too late to refuse, for it

had been carefully kept secret by his friends who feared, he would escape in sullen terror! At nine o'clock on the evening of July 19th 1869, hundreds of students, bearing flaming torches and followed by a dense crowd, assembled before Keller's house, and a mighty wave of sound went up: thousands of voices singing "O, mein Vaterland!"

The tiny figure of the Herr Staatsschreiber appeared on the balcony. He could not refuse to respond to the honour they wished to do him and, after all, he was only outwardly churlish, his soul was the soul of a poet, despite years of officialdom. He thanked the singers warmly and told them they had perhaps awoken his slumbering muse: "if the flare of your torches has roused her, it is not my fault if she has grown to be an old woman. Old women can be interesting, no doubt, but they may be spiteful and they are invariably gossips!" Loud applause greeted his brief speech and finally the students induced Keller to accompany them to the "Tonhalle" where the night was passed in toasts, enthusiastic harangues and merriment. This noisy celebration of an author's birthday turned out to be of import to the world of literature, for, as tho' the students' torches had indeed roused Keller's muse, from that day onward he began to write again. Old plans, old notes, bundles of yellowing manuscript were searched thro' and, with the habit of work his official occupation had taught him, Gottfried Keller recommenced the task the gods had set him.

The first book to appear was "Die Sieben Legenden." Years before, Keller had come across two volumes composed at the beginning of the century by a protestant pastor, Ludwig Kosegarten. Badly written tho' the book was, it had caught Keller's fancy, for he found there the outline of forgotten legends which not all Pastor Kosegarten's flimsy workmanship had succeeded in robbing of their quaint mediæval charm. In Berlin Keller had sketched out his version of these legends and had even gone so far as to offer it to a publisher, but now he took it in hand and made of it a thing of abiding beauty.

The first legend "Eugenia" plays in Alexandria and is the history of the pedantic Roman maiden who, desirous of

spending her life in study, refuses to marry the Proconsul Aquilinus, although she loves him. Fascinated by the chant of the Christian monks, she disguises herself as a man and becomes a novice in a monastery. Her learning and piety earn her a saintly reputation and after a short time she is chosen abbot. Her father, having been told by an oracle that she has been wafted to a star by the gods, proudly sets up her statue in the Temple. This news is brought to the monastery and Eugenia decides to destroy the statue. She repairs at night to the Temple and, while she is gazing on her beautiful counterfeit, she hears someone approaching. She hides and sees her spurned lover, Aquilinus, kissing the statue's marble lips.

The following day, the saintly abbot is called to the bedside of a beautiful widow. This lady has feigned illness as she is consumed with an evil passion for the "abbot." Eugenia sternly rejects her amorous advances, whereupon the spiteful widow denounces the "abbot" as a vile seducer and Eugenia and the seventy monks are summoned before the Proconsul's tribunal. The abbot demands a private audience with the Proconsul who, strangely moved by the saintly voice, consents. When she is closeted with Aquilinus she throws the monk's cowl from her head and cries out: "I am Eugenia whom you once wooed!" Of course he recognises her, but jealousy of the years she has spent among seventy monks causes him to simulate incredulity, and he replies harshly that Eugenia is a goddess, whose statue is honoured in the Temple. Eugenia pleads that surely he dare not condemn her, when only a few hours since he has kissed the lips of her marble portrait! But Aquilinus pretends to disbelieve her, whereupon with a cry of: "then may God help me!" she flings off her monk's habit and stands naked, revealed in all her pure and dazzling beauty. She breaks down and sobs, and Aquilinus gathers her into his arms and wraps her in his own cloak. He returns to the Hall of Judgment and informs the monks that they are blameless, but that they have been bewitched and their holy abbot was a foul demon, who has now vanished from Alexandria for ever! Aquilinus bears Eugenia away far from the city, they are married and the erstwhile pedant virgin and abbot becomes a

passionately tender wife. She converts Aquilinus to Christianity, and during the Valerian persecution they suffer martyrdom together.

Such is the outline of the first legend which in Keller's master hand is wrought to a beautiful poem. The scenes tho' dramatic, are brief, the form being narration. There is none of that cloying sweetness which too often mars the telling of legends and Keller's unobtrusive humour never fails. Above all, "Eugenia," in common with all the Seven Legends, is delightful reading, easy and entertaining.

The second legend "The Virgin and the Devil" is headed by a verse warning against Satan's wiles. It is from Angelus Silesius' "Cherubinischer Wandersmann."

The Knight Gebizo, in the vanity of his ambition to be applauded as the benefactor of the neighbourhood, has squandered his wealth in building churches and monasteries, in maintaining a great retinue and in dispensing boundless hospitality. His coffers are empty and he is in a sorry plight. He goes out one Easter morning to mope in the forest, refusing to attend Mass, with his beautiful and devout wife, Bertrade. The Prince of Darkness appears to him and the foolish knight strikes a bargain with him: in return for unlimited gold he is to deliver Bertrade to Satan on Walpurgis night. Bertrade knows nothing of this pact, yet when Gebizo commands her to ride off with him alone on a journey, she is assailed by foreboding. Their path leads them past a little chapel which Bertrade, out of compassion for an impoverished builder, has secretly caused to be builded. She begs Gebizo to suffer her to dismount and make her orison to the Blessed Virgin, and the knight, fearing a refusal might arouse her suspicion of his dastardly intent, consents. No sooner does Bertrade kneel in prayer than deep sleep enfolds her, and the Beloved Mother, coming down from the altar, assumes her shape and takes her place on horseback beside the knight.

When Gebizo and the Blessed Virgin reach the trysting-place, the Devil on a tall, black steed is awaiting them. He seizes the bridle of the Lady's palfrey and gallops away with her over the hills. They come to a wide, bleak heath where the

Devil draws rein and gallantly assists the Lady to dismount. A magic garden springs up around them, roses bloom, birds sing, fountains splash and the Prince of Evil woos the Lady passionately. Only one night in May, thro' the love of an earthly woman, does he, the Eternally Lonely One, know happiness. The Lady opens her arms to him and he sinks enraptured on her bosom. Then the Blessed Virgin reassumes her own shape and clasping Satan in her arms endeavours to carry him to Heaven, meaning to deliver him in all his misery, to the mockery of the saints and angels. The Prince of Evil summons to his aid the shining beauty which had been his as Lucifer the Morning Star, and thus the two great forces of the universe: the beauty of good and the radiancy of evil do fierce battle. But tho' the Blessed Virgin fights right valiantly she cannot lift the Evil One to Heaven and she has to be content with forcing him to vow renouncement of the Lady Bertrade. Wearily the Prince of Evil draws off from the battle, and wearily the Queen of Heaven regains her altar in the wayside chapel. Gebizo meanwhile has ridden over a precipice and has broken his neck.

The Lady Bertrade returns to her castle and lives in quiet content, yet after a time, finding solitude un-fitting to her youth, she prays the Mother of all women's hearts to provide her with a husband, and this is the subject of the third legend "The Virgin Knight."

The fame of Bertrade's beauty and wealth spreads thro' the land, even the Emperor hears of it and wishful to see for himself whether report speaks true, His Grace entrusts the Knight Zendelwald with a letter warning the Lady Bertrade of his royal advent. Zendelwald, hospitably received, falls in love with Bertrade, but being a timid lover and by nature taciturn, he leaves the castle without declaring his passion, although the Lady Bertrade looks on him with evident favour. Zendelwald rides to a half ruined tower where his mother lives in penury. She is a mighty huntress and all unafflicted with any portion of her son's taciturnity. When she hears how Zendelwald has been graciously made welcome by the widow, she shrewdly suspects that his heart is thall to the

Lady Bertrade. One day a stranger rides up to the tower and craves a night's lodging. The last flask of wine is brought from the cellar and the doughty old dame entertains the stranger not according to her wealth, but according to her knightly tradition, while the stranger regales her with the news of the countryside. He tells how the Emperor and all his courtiers have fallen victim to the enchantment of the Lady Bertrade; and how, as she will have none of them, the Emperor has commanded a grand tournament, whose victor is to be rewarded by the Lady Bertrade's hand; and how she has consented to this phantastic ordinance, trusting the Blessed Virgin, her especial Protectress, to grant victory to a knight whom She, in Her wisdom, deems worthy.

When the stranger departs, the mother tells Zendelwald that if he does not hasten forthwith to the tourney, she will lay her curse upon him! So Zendelwald rides away, but after the manner of dreamers, he lingers on his road, letting his thoughts weave fair pictures of his beloved, instead of spurring forward to contend with fate. He comes upon a little wayside chapel and, being a devout knight, he halts to pray. It is the chapel where Bertrade had found so timely a succour and the Blessed Virgin deals in like fashion with Zendelwald; she casts profound slumber over him and stepping down from the altar, she assumes his shape and rides to the tourney in his stead. Tho' the lists are still open when the Virgin Knight appears, she is greeted with mocking cries of: "Here comes Sir Zendelwald the Tardy." Unheeding she rides into the tilting yard and with marvellous prowess unhorses knight after knight and is proclaimed victor of the joust. At the banquet after the tourney, she plays the lover's role as ardently as a human lover; indeed who should know better how to capture a woman's fancy than the dear Mother who has known the secret of so many women's hearts? And ere the banquet is half ended, the Lady Bertrade is as enamoured as any lover could wish! Meanwhile Zendelwald awakes in the chapel and now hastens to the Emperor's castle. He hears loud talk among the courtiers of one Sir Zendelwald whose exploits have astounded the court. Much perplexed, he shoulders his way through

the throng until, to his bewilderment, he catches sight of his second-self seated beside Bertrade at the Emperor's table, and he sees how this wraith presses the betrothal kiss upon the Lady's lips. Distraught with jealousy he rushes forward and at that moment the Virgin Knight vanishes and only Zendelwald himself stands beside the Lady Bertrade. When Zendelwald tells his miraculous history to the Lady Bertrade, she understands it is the Blessed Mother who has once more befriended her and it is with a grateful soul that she becomes Zendelwald's wife. Long years of joy are theirs and the wedded lovers fail not to wend their way on feast days to the little wayside chapel, where the Blessed Mother stands as serene and unmoved as though she had never stepped down from the altar to do such valiant combat for a woman's happiness.

Perhaps the most delightful of all is the "Legend of the Madonna and the Nun." Sister Beatrix was the fairest of the nuns in the cloister on the hill. She was zealous in her service of our Lady's altar. She it was who tolled the bell which called the nuns to prayer in the grey dawn and at set of sun. Her slim figure was to be seen early and late in choir and church, moving with quiet dignity about her sacristan's work. She was reputed to be the most devout among them all, "a very saint" they said, as they saw her kneeling untiring in her prayers. And yet the heart of Sister Beatrix was full of unrest, often her gaze wandered thro' the narrow sacristy window to the wild, strange world beyond, and when her ear caught the echo of hunting horns in the forest her eyes grew dim with tears and her soft lips parted in a sigh. One moonlit night of June, when all was still, Sister Beatrix glided into the church and stood before Our Lady's altar. "Oh!, Mary Mother," she whispered, "long years thro' I have served Thee faithfully, but now my blood is afire for the world and love. Take Thou the keys of the sacristy. I can resist no more." Into the moonlight she sped away, and silence fell upon the shadowy chapel where the lamps shone before Our Lady's shrine.

How she met Knight Wonnebold, who was riding home from the Crusade; how they spoke together and she confessed that she had escaped from the cloister because her heart

was too burning young for ceaseless prayer; how the knight took her up on his tall steed and kissed her lips; how they lived in his castle happily together, until a gambling baron came and played dice for prodigious stakes with Sir Wonnebold, who, having lost all his gold, wagered his most precious jewel: the fair Beatrix; and how the baron, having won the throw, rode away with his prize in triumph, but was outwitted by the lady, who escaped and returned to Sir Wonnebold; all this is grandly told.

The story flows on swiftly. Beatrix becomes Sir Wonnebold's wedded wife and bears him eight strong sons. Then her conscience pricks her and she rises at dead of night, casts a last loving look upon her kindly lord and makes her way thro' the forest and up to the cloister on the hill. To her surprise, the portress-nun admits her without so much as an astonished look or a word of comment. All seems unchanged, the sacristy is in the same good order in which Sister Beatrix had left it twelve years since, the flowers on the altar are arranged in the way she had always set them. As in a dream she kneels before Our Lady's shrine. The statue of the dear Mother bends down to her, and a mild voice speaks: "Thou hast been absent very long, my child! I have done thy work for thee all thro' the years, but now I am right glad thou hast come home."

Again it is as in a dream that Sister Beatrix takes her place in the refectory, and here too her return causes no astonishment, for Our Lady has gone about in her semblance and no one has noticed her absence. Some of the nuns are no longer there, but sleeping the great sleep beneath the cloister's paving stones; some that were young, twelve years since, are grave and aged, and some who then were hale and vigorous are grown old and frail. But the unbroken tranquillity of the nunnery life is unchanged. And Sister Beatrix goes about her tasks once more, unchanged too, save that in her heart the memory of a loving miracle burns like another lamp in Our Lady's honour.

The days fly past on the swift wings of monotony. Two years, five years, ten years are over! Sometimes Sister Beatrix

yearns for Sir Wonnebold and for her lusty sons, but she is faithful to Our Lady who kept such faithful tryst with her. Then comes the day when the nuns are to celebrate a grand festival in honour of God's gracious Mother. Each one has worked some offering for Our Lady's altar: this one has illumined a missal with gold leaf and carmine and blue; another has embroidered an altar-cloth with gilded trceries and glowing flowers; a scholarly sister has written a latin hymn in praise of Mary Mother; a musician nun has composed a stately litany. And those who are unlettered or unskilled in finer needle work, have sewed little shirts for the Child Christ which His poor shall wear in memory of His dear Mother. Even the nun of the kitchen has brought her tribute of crisp sugared waffles, for that is the best she can do! Only Sister Beatrix has made nothing, altho' she prays half thro' the night before the Blessed Virgin's shrine.

All the offerings are laid near the altar, the organ peals forth and the nuns' clear voices are rising up to heaven in a chant of praise, when the heavy, nail-studded church door is flung open and a tall, old knight enters, followed by eight sturdy young warriors. The nun's voices waver for an instant, for never have the saintly women seen so goodly a company, and Sister Beatrix springs up from her choir-stall and flies, like a homing dove, into the old knight's arms. The music breaks off and all the nuns gather round, while Sister Beatrix recounts her wonderful history, and when she tells of Our dear Lady's miracle they all fall upon their knees in awe. And then another miracle is wrought, for unseen hands crown Sister Beatrix's eight warrior sons with wreaths of young oak leaves, in token that the beloved Mother accepts them as Sister Beatrix' offering on this Her holy festival.

It is all very pure in its simple poetry, very tender and reverent, but it is possibly comprehensible that this Madonna legend is not often recommended as literature for convents.

The fifth legend "The wicked Saint Vitalis" is the story of a monk whose fanatic soul burned with the desire to convert whores from their evil lives and, at the same time, to endure the martyrdom of being unjustly accused of lechery. His

method was to give tryst to a whore and to spend the night with her in prayer and exhortation. Thus he had converted hundreds of frail ones, but, obedient to his behest, the converts had not divulged his secret and he was reputed to be the most evil living monk in the world. There was a harlot whom he had endeavoured to convert, spending many nights with her in vehement argument. Each dawn he left her apparently a repentant lamb, each evening he found her once more insolently recalcitrant. Now, opposite this harlot's house there dwelt a wealthy Greek merchant, whose daughter, Iole, having watched the harlot's manoeuvres, decided, for the honour of the sex, to circumvent her. Iole caused her Father to purchase the house and to bribe the harlot to leave Alexandria immediately. The woman accepted, and when Vitalis arrived that night, he found Iole installed in her stead. She informed him that the harlot, suddenly repentant, had departed into the desert to expiate her sins by prayer and fasting and that she, Iole had taken her place and meant to practise the same merry trade. Vitalis immediately set about converting Iole, and tho' all his exhortations were met with mockery, he was filled with increasing fervour. When he believed he had at last succeeded in his holy task, Iole told him the only effect had been to make her fall in love with him!

Vitalis fled from her in consternation and went to implore the Blessed Virgin's aid in this unexpected ordeal. He prayed before a Madonna statue which was really an ancient marble figure of the goddess Juno, protectress of conjugal love. Humbly Vitalis implored Our Lady to grant him a sign of Her approbation by bending Her head, but altho' he prayed long and patiently, the statue remained unmoved. And yet, he thought a subtle, indulgent smile hovered about the marble lips and it seemed to him that the face grew like to Iole's! Much perturbed he wandered about the city all day—dreaming of Iole—of Iole whom he must convert.

That night he found the harlot's house decorated with magnificent carpets and furnished with rich divans. Iole told him this splendor was to celebrate her farewell, as she meant to take the veil, his arguments having convinced her; but she

beseached him for once to don worldly apparel, as she desired to test the strength of her decision: if she resisted so great a temptation, she said, she would be assured she was fitted for a life of prayer. Vitalis, utterly befooled, consented to put on the gorgeous robes prepared for him.

When he was seated beside Iole, looking for all the world like a handsome prince, she took his hand and confessed the trick she had practised upon him, adding that she saw her scheming had been in vain, but that she was now ready to listen to his exhortations earnestly. She prayed him however first to eat and drink for his refreshment and she mixed him a goblet of wine and spices. It was delicious to Vitalis to be thus gently tended by a woman, and he grew so comfortably drowsy that, after a short time, he fell fast asleep.

When he awoke he was alone, and he might have deemed it a dream, had he not still worn the worldly robes. Conscience stricken, he sought for his monk's garb, but he only found a heap of ashes and a few charred shreds of his habit. He hurried away to his monastery, but the monks, weary of the constant reports of his infamies, turned the garden-hose upon him! Thus expelled from the Brotherhood, he determined to embrace secular life and renounce both his proselytising and his phantastic plan of mortification. He married Iole, became a model husband and a respected citizen and, the real history of his doings leaking out, the churchmen were inconsolable at having lost so promising a saint! They did their best to lure him back to the monastery, but Iole, tenacious and resourceful, triumphantly kept him for herself.

"Dorothea's Basket" is the next legend. It tells of a Roman patrician's daughter, Dorothea, who is wooed by the Proconsul Fabrizio, but her heart is given to the young roman Theophilus. She will not confess her love, and torments Theophilus by pretending to favour the Proconsul. This Fabrizio is a cruel and haughty man and an oppressor of the Christians. Dorothea's parents are secretly adherents of the new faith and Dorothea now becomes a Christian. She rejects both Fabrizio and Theophilus, protesting that she is the bride of a Heavenly Spouse. Ruthless in his anger and jealousy, Fabrizio orders

her to be put to the torture and she is bound upon a gridiron over a fire. Theophilus endeavours to rescue her, but when she cries out that the flames are the roses her Celestial Spouse has sent her, he recoils, deeming her possessed of an evil spirit. Despite torture, she refuses to recant, and the Proconsul condemns her to death. Theophilus encounters her as she is led to the scaffold and she proclaims that she is hastening to the garden of her Beloved, which is full of roses and delicious fruits. In mockery Theophilus asks her to send him some of the fruit and flowers.

He is mourning her death when an angel appears and gives him a basket of roses and apples saying: "Dorothea sends thee this." Theophilus rushes before the Proconsul's tribunal and declares that he has embraced Dorothea's faith. Executed that very day he rejoins Dorothea in paradise.

Out of this rather conventional material Gottfried Keller succeeded in making a thing of such beauty that it haunts the memory like a melody. It is very short and simple and Keller has caught something of that touching naïveté which we love in the paintings of the Italian primitives. It might be a picture of some saintly history by Fra Angelico.

The last and seventh story is the "Little Legend of the Dance." Here Christian lore and pagan mythology are mixed in the crucible of Keller's mind into a gem of price. According to Saint Gregory, Musa the Dancer is among the saints and it fell out in this wise: Musa, the daughter of honest parents, was a comely maiden who served Our Lady zealously. She had only one passion: an insatiable love of dancing. She danced all day with her companions, she danced in the garden and over the meadows and she even danced alone in her attic room. One evening, when she was praying at Our Lady's altar, she was taken by an incontrollable impulse to dance a prayer before the dear Mother. To her surprise she was joined by an elderly gentleman in purple robes with a golden crown on his head and a great silvery beard falling upon his broad breast, and a number of small naked angels appeared, their fat little legs hanging down from the marble balustrade before the choir-stalls. These little musicians struck up a merry strain upon

their pipes and cymbals, their little sackbuts, their fiddles and rebecks. And Musa and the old man in the purple robes danced and danced, until the maiden was breathless. But her ancient partner was quite fresh and cool although his robes were mighty heavy. He said he was King David, the ancestor of the Blessed Virgin and now Her envoy. He asked Musa whether she would like to spend eternity in a dance of such sheer rapture that all earthly dancing would seem to her as the clumsy limping of an old man? Musa answered she could wish for nothing better, whereupon King David told her she had only to refrain from dancing all the days of her life, and, in reward, she should dance in heaven for ever and ever. Poor little Musa was much cast down; how could she live without dancing? And how could she be sure of dancing in heaven, for she had always been told that everything was different after death. King David explained that people on earth imagine all sorts of fool things about death and heaven, and that if she did as he proposed he could promise she should dance to her heart's content in eternity; but that he really must insist upon a prompt decision one way or the other, as they required one or two more dancers in heaven, and he must look elsewhere, if she took so long in making up her mind. Musa was still hesitating when King David signed to the angel musicians and they started the most delicious melody Musa had ever heard, but when she tried a few steps she found that even her light and graceful body was far too heavy to dance to such an ethereal rhythm. So she laid her hand in King David's and vowed she would never dance again on earth.

Musa went home and built herself a hut in her parents' garden, where she lay on a bed of moss and leaves and, as her little white feet kept on moving and trying to dance in spite of her efforts to stay still, she fastened them together with a chain. She passed her days and nights in prayer and fasting. Soon the fame of her holiness spread thro' the country-side and many came to seek her counsel and children with deformed feet were brought to her and were miraculously cured when she laid her hand upon them.

Three years Musa lay upon her bed of moss. She had grown

pale and wan, although her eyes were bright and her lips smiled. At last, on a bleak autumn morning, the little saint lay dying. The news ran like wildfire thro' the village and Musa's garden was crowded with sorrowing men and women. Musa lay with folded hands waiting for death very happily. A chill breeze was blowing and the autumn leaves fell in a shower of russet and gold. Suddenly the wind turned soft and warm and it was laden with a dulcet melody. The trees put forth a glory of green leaves, white roses and myrtles blossomed and flowers sprang up everywhere. The little saint breathed a long sigh of contentment, and the chain around her feet burst asunder. The sky opened and everyone saw how a great company of comely youths and maidens danced in stately measure, while a shining, kingly figure swept down upon a fleecy bank of clouds and gathered Musa into his arms. Then the peasants in the garden saw how Musa, with most wondrous grace, danced away thro' the beautiful throng. The clouds drew together again and in the garden it was a bleak autumn morning, with the leaves falling before the breeze.

But in heaven was high festival. It was that one day in the year when the Nine Muses were hospitably entertained in paradise. Now, when the dances and all the ceremonies were over, the heavenly hosts sat down to a grand banquet and little Musa was brought to the table where the Nine were seated. The Muses, a trifle awed in heaven, looked about them timidly, but kindly Martha, in a large white kitchen-apron, watched over them and saw they did not lack a housewife's comfortable care—even in paradise! But only when Saint Cecilia and some other art lovers among the saints came to the Muses' table did they take heart and regain their ease. Then Terpsichore and Saint Cecilia, Polyhymnia and Euterpe fell into a merry converse and many little boy angels crowded round to be made much of by the beautiful women. King David brought a jewelled goblet of nectar and they all drank of it, and when the old king was leaving their table he could not refrain from stroking fair Erato's check. It was so gay that Our Dear Lady in all her beauty came to see what was going on and She kissed Urania, the star goddess, gently on the lips and said She would

never rest until She managed to arrange for the Muses to stay in paradise always.

Up to this Gottfried Keller wrought a jewel, but the end of the "Little Legend of the Dance" is unfortunate and we hear no more of Musa. The Muses appear at the next heavenly festival with a chant they have composed for the occasion. This turns out badly, as it has nothing heavenly in its cadence and it disturbs and displeases the celestial hosts so much that the Muses are expelled and never permitted to return. This rather burlesque ending is unworthy of the rest of the legend. It is the only instance of Keller's spoiling a fine thing by a lack of taste. The episode of the Muses' discomfiture is an anticlimax, while Musa, who is the chief subject, vanishes entirely before the end.

CHAPTER V.

Dietegen. The Misused Love Letters.
The Smith of his own Luck. Clothes maketh
Man. The Lost Smile.

A mong the hoarded papers of the Berlin time were two novellen which had found no room in the first volume of "The People of Seldwyla;" these are "The misused Love-Letters" and "The Smith of his own Luck." Viehweg had intended to publish them in a second volume of the Seldwyla series. Keller, according to his wont, had promised, had even signed a contract undertaking to deliver the whole manuscript by April 1857, but the matter dragged on and nearly twenty years later the contract was cancelled. Keller had to refund certain monies which he had received in advance, but this did not trouble him. He defended his genius against pecuniary considerations with reckless thoroughness, "protected his laziness" scoffed his detractors and some of his disappointed friends. But again, who is the better judge? The man who does the work according to the mysterious laws of his genius, or the public and the publishers who, at first, prefer the punctuality of the tradesman in current fiction? As Auerbach once wrote to Keller: pregnant women and great authors always miscalculate!

After the appearance of the "Sieben Legenden," Keller commenced work in earnest upon the unfinished novellen which were to make up the second Seldwyla volume. As we have seen, two stories, "The Love Letters" and "The Smith" were more or less completed and now Keller turned his thoughts to "Dietegen," the rough copy of which Mathilde Wesendonck claimed to have read in 1862. This is more a short historical novel than a novelle. It is a magnificent bit of work and when we read the historical studies by Keller, we wonder how it

was he wrote so few, for he surpasses Conrad Ferdinand Meyer and most other historical novel writers. Keller never slips into an anachronism; his historical detail is founded on discriminating study of chronicles; and he was dowered with that intuition of the colour of bygone centuries without which an historical novel is only a puppet show of obsolete modes—a meaningless masquerade. His personages are seldom historical celebrities, but simple people of olden times into whose veins he poured the red blood of his genius, making them live again to play their story out before us, illustrating the customs and, above all, showing us the "Zeitgeist" of their day. We feel ourselves in safe and conscientious hands when reading Keller's historical work. There is an anecdote which gives us a clue to his conception of the minute accuracy indispensable for historical romance writing: a young author brought him the manuscript of a tale whose plot centred round a gold coin stamped with Julius Cæsar's head. "It is quite a good story," Keller said, "provided there are gold coins with Julius Cæsar's head on them." The young writer replied that there were many gold coins with Roman Emperors' heads and he was "almost sure" there were some with Julius Cæsar's. "Almost sure is not good enough," grumbled Meister Gottfried, "find out, and then write your story."

"Dietegen" is a picture of Swiss life in the fifteenth century. The cities of Seldwyla and Ruechenstein have been at enmity for generations and the story opens with the famous parody of mediæval urban strife: the skirmish wherein the Seldwylers overcome the Ruechensteiners by means of enormous brushes on long poles, wherewith, reaching over their opponents' weapons, they paint the Ruechensteiner's noses black. This had long been the punishment inflicted upon any Ruechensteiner caught trespassing on Seldwyla territory, and now they flee from the battlefield before the paint brushes. The Seldwylers pursue them to the city walls and daub the gates with black paint. Some prisoners are captured on both sides and their exchange leads to a declaration of peace which is celebrated by banquets in both cities. The banquet at Ruechenstein is described in detail. Up to here the half mocking

tone is maintained, but now Keller commences the sombre history of the boy Dietegen. This foundling, who was employed by a cooper as drudge of all work, had been sent with a tarnished metal jug to buy vinegar for the cooper's salad. A Jewish pedlar, espying the jug in the child's hands, recognised it as fine silver beneath the coating of dirt. He exchanged it with Dietegen for an old crossbow and the boy, forgetful of his errand, played with the crossbow until the irate cooper, having waited vainly for his vinegar, came to seek him. The Jew was arrested as a vagrant and, when the silver jug was found in his sack, he saved his skin by declaring Dietegen had offered it to him for sale. Death was the penalty in Ruechenstein for larceny and the Ruechensteiners, desirous of concluding the celebration of peace with the delightful spectacle of an execution, considered that the unfortunate Dietegen would come in opportunely. So he was condemned to be hung.

After the peace banquet the Seldwylers assemble at the town-hall windows to witness the cortege to the gallows, but, being kindly souls, they do not relish the sight as much as their hosts. Dietegen, in white grave-clothes, his fair hair falling about his neck, his hands bound behind his back, resembles some little Christian martyr and the good-hearted Seldwylers turn away with tears in their eyes. When the guests are leaving the city, they chance upon the gaolers returning with the corpse in a paupers' coffin, and a strange thing happens: Kün-golt, the Seldwyla forester's little daughter, springs forward, pushes the unnailed coffin lid aside and Dietegen, who has been insufficiently strangled, opens his blue eyes and gazes at her in bewilderment. The Seldwyla women gather round, they moisten the boy's lips with wine, chafe his numbed limbs and soon restore him to consciousness. Much to the Ruechensteiners' disgust they beg for the child to be handed over to them and, it being difficult to refuse a guest's prayer, the Ruechensteiners are obliged to let them have Dietegen.

Now comes an account of Dietegen and Kün-golt. No one has surpassed Keller in writing of children. He has such simplicity and he tells of real children, not tiresome manikins saying things no child could say. Dear Meister Gottfried!

He who never knew the love of woman, nor the kiss of children's lips, yet drew children with unerring pen, guided by the secret of his tenderness.

The years go swiftly and peaceably past in the forester's house; Dietegen and Küngolt are stripling and maiden; the gentle mother dies and a former love of the forester's, his cousin Violante, arrives and worms her way into the family circle. She gains a bad influence over Küngolt, who becomes coquettish and flighty, and the comradeship with Dietegen loses something of its frankness. One day a noisy crew of young men from Ruechenstein come to the Forsthaus. Among them is the son of the Mayor of Ruechenstein, and Violante whispers to Küngolt to ensnare him and thus become Lady Mayoress some day; but Küngolt takes it into her head to captivate all the young men. She steals a love-potion which belongs to Violante, and, mixing it in wine, gives it to the company. A drunken brawl ensues and the Mayor's son is killed by one of the Ruechensteiners, who, to shield himself, accuses Küngolt of being the cause of the disaster. Unwisely Küngolt owns to mixing the love-potion in the wine, whereupon the churl denounces her as a witch who has bedevilled them all. The Ruechensteiners clamour for her death, but the Seldwyla magistrates let her off with a year's imprisonment. This revives the enmity between the towns and it is henceforward dangerous for a Seldwylan to cross the Ruechenstein border. Küngolt is not put in gaol, but is handed over to the city grave-digger, to be locked up in a dismal little room overlooking the churchyard. She is terrified at the thought of spending the nights among the graves, so Dietegen stations himself at her window and, keeps faithful vigil night after night, altho' his heart is bitter against her, for he deems her a deceitful wench. One evening, before Dietegen has arrived to keep watch, the Ruechensteiner, who had denounced her, slinks up to the window and importunes her with lustful proposals. She cowers in the furthest corner of her room, but the Ruechensteiner persists and is just breaking thro' the window bars, when Dietegen comes up and beats him off. The grave-digger now takes his captive into the kitchen and

chains her to the stove. This is a betterment in her lot, but Dietegen, suspicious and jealous, ceases coming to see her. However, she shares the grave-digger's family life, and a little joy enters her dreary existence. A young priest often visits the family and an innocent friendship springs up between him and the "witch girl." On New Year's Eve he is invited to sup. The table is placed near the stove, so that Küngolt may be of the party. The homely merriment draws a laugh even from the poor witch and the priest lays his hand on her's. It is at this moment that Dietegen enters. He thinks all his suspicions of her are confirmed and storms off in anger and disgust. The Burgundians have invaded Switzerland and Dietegen persuades Küngolt's father to go off with him to the wars. The worthy forester is killed at the battle of Grandson where Charles the Bold and his Burgundians are routed by the Swiss. Dietegen remains with the soldiery, for a Landsknecht's life suits his reckless mood, and he becomes a boon companion of the roughest of the mercenaries, drowning the memory of Küngolt in riotous living. Küngolt's term of punishment expires and she returns to the Forsthaus where Violante lingers. Forsaken and sorrowful, Küngolt is wandering in the woods one day and has not noticed that she has strayed beyond the Ruechenstein boundary. The lout, who had pestered her in her graveyard prison, has dogged her steps. He seizes her and drags her to Ruechenstein. As she will have nought to do with him, he, at least, desires the pleasure of seeing her die. The Ruechensteiners sentence her to death.

Now Violante, who has repented of her wickedness, determines to save Küngolt. She seeks out Dietegen, confesses that her evil counsels were to blame for the girl's foolish ways and that she had schemed thus to get rid of her in order to reign undisturbed in the Forsthaus. She tells him that Küngolt loves him, that she is pure and innocent and reminds him that he owes her his life. Dietegen, his generosity stirred, his heart aflame with love again, rides to the rescue. He reaches Ruechenstein only just in time, for Küngolt is kneeling before the block and the headsman's sword is raised to strike. With a mighty cry Dietegen bids him hold! By mediæval law a

witch goes free, if she is claimed as an honest man's bride. Dietegen and Küngolt are wedded before the block by the priest who had waited to shrive the witch, and Dietegen strides off over hill and dale bearing his half swooning bride upon his shoulders.

The lovers dwell in the Forsthaus, Dietegen having been appointed forester of Seldwyla in the dead man's place. Years speed by and Dietegen, whom Küngolt saved from the gallows, and Küngolt, whom Dietegen snatched from the headsman's block, live out their lives in faithful love.

"The Misused Love Letters" is more involved than the other novellen. The subject is the discomfiture of a prig. The merchant Viggi Störteler, a would-be-author, orders his wife, Gritli, during his absence on a journey, to write him fitting answers to the literary letters which he sends her. Gritli is a sensible, shrewd young person, but incapable of carrying out this behest, so she hits on the plan of copying her spouse's effusions and altering them to appear like a woman's love letters to a man. These she sends to Wilhelm, a young student, and begs him to reply in a similar strain. He is puzzled, but he consents to oblige her. Gritli copies his answers, making the necessary alterations, and forwards them to Viggi, who believes his wife is at last becoming cultured and literary, a mate for a genius such as he. Wilhelm falls in love with Gritli thro' her letters, and she, to her consternation, discovers that her heart thrills to the letters Wilhelm writes for her.

On his return Viggi is passing thro' a wood near Seldwyla, when he comes upon Wilhelm resting beneath the trees. Viggi is singing what he imagines to be a melodious song. Wilhelm, to escape from this inharmonious interruption of his reverie, goes off, leaving behind him a leather case containing the love letters. Viggi opens it and finds his own letters in Gritli's writing, improved by many simple and tender expressions such as he, despite his literary talent, had not thought of! Highly incensed, he hastens to Seldwyla, upbraids Gritli in superlatively dramatic terms, refuses to listen to her explanation, locks her up in the cellar and goes to the inn to seek the solace of an excellent

supper. The following morning he accuses Gritli of being a wanton and turns her out of the house. They are divorced, with that delightful ease and promptitude which is so refreshing in novels. Viggi now falls into the clutches of a designing spinster, who, by fooling him with flattery, succeeds in marrying him. This Kätter Ambach is one of Keller's celebrated caricatures, she and Störteler are cruel portraits of Fanny Lewald and the writer Stahr, whom he hated and called collectively "that four-legged, two-sexed ink-animal!" The literary couple is almost forgotten nowadays, while Keller's caricatures live on.

Gritli, disconcerted by the Seldwyler's sympathy which is fraught with curiosity, retires to the country, and Wilhelm, by chance, takes up his abode in the same neighbourhood. After some time, she goes to him and, being a frank and practical young woman, confesses that she loves him and offers to share her life with him. They marry and settle in the country, content to be simple matter of fact people, undisturbed by literary ambition. Viggi and Kätter fall on evil days, his budget is much reduced by the loss of Gritli's substantial fortune and Kätter, altho' affecting the loftiest intellectual tastes, eats the hapless prig out of house and home, her only occupation being the gratification of an inordinate greed for rich victuals.

Notwithstanding its qualities "The Misused Love Letters" falls short of the other novellen. It is not clear cut and there are pages which could have been omitted with advantage. This is especially the case towards the end, where Keller indulges in an elaborate mystification of Wilhelm in order to lead up to Gritli's visit. It smacks of the plot of a Mozart opera libretto: disguised pretty girl as emissary of distressed lady—virtuous but hoodwinked lover—all are there! Yet there are some unforgettable scenes and the characterisation is admirable.

"The Smith of his own Luck" is intensely comic and the intentional sobriety of the writing heightens the comic effect. It is the history of one Johannes Kabis, who tho' conducting his life on the principle of the old motto: "each man must be the smith of his own luck" hopes to attract good fortune by affecting patrician leisure and elegance. He commences by changing the unpretentious name of Johannes to the English

"John" and embellishing his patronymic by spelling it K-a-b-y-s. Then he plans to amplify his cognomen by espousing a maiden of high-sounding surname and hyphenating it to Kabys. His choice falls on Fräulein Oliva, whose charms are enhanced by a good dowry. Kabys-Oliva! What an euphonious combination! Fortunately he ascertains that the damsel is Frau Oliva's prematrimonial exploit and thus legally bears the unlovely name of Häuptle. John promptly breaks off his engagement to the daughter and offers marriage to mother Oliva, who, having discovered him to be foolish, refuses him with contumely. John's meagre funds are now at so low an ebb that he is obliged to earn his living. His sole accomplishment is shaving, so he establishes himself as a barber. One day, a customer enters into conversation and lets fall that the name Kabys recalls to his memory an Augsburg citizen, a Herr Litumlei, who had recently remarked that he counted among his ancestors a member of the distinguished Swiss Kabys family. John, seeing herein the hand of fate, promptly sets out for Augsburg. He finds the Litumlei mansion without difficulty and, as there happens to be no servant in the courtyard, he makes bold to enter and seek his kinsman. He goes up the stairs and, thro' an open door, hears a querulous voice lamenting that its owner cannot shave. John comes forward, takes the razor from the queer old fellow who is thus lamenting, shaves him dexterously, inquires if he is Herr Litumlei and introduces himself as John Kabys, a Swiss relative. Herr Litumlei embraces him effusively and leading him to a gallery, points out, among other ancestral Litumlei portraits, the picture of a lady whom he declares to have been his grandmother and John's great-grand aunt. A label affixed to the frame tells the same story, which however is contradicted by a latin inscription on the picture itself, but as neither John nor Herr Litumlei are acquainted with the humanities, it matters nothing. John is introduced to Frau Litumlei and invited to stay with his new relations. After some weeks, Herr Litumlei confesses that he has purchased the ancestral portraits, that he is a retired tradesman and that, altho' his grand-mother was really a Swiss Kabys, he is perfectly aware she was of humble origin.

In fact, the whole aristocratic pretention is a sham! He adds that the present Frau Litumlei is childless and that her predecessors, both of whom he has divorced for sterility, have been so tactless as to present large families to his successors. He is in need of an heir and he proposes to adopt John, on the condition that he pretends to be his illegitimate offspring. John accepts and the pair set themselves to write the romantic history of the spurious amorous adventure which ushered John into existence. This precious document is to be treasured in the Litumlei family archives. The account of this joint composition is one of the most amusing things Keller ever wrote.

John would have been entirely blissful, had not a misgiving concerning Frau Litumlei disturbed his mind. This lady, who passes her time in alternate eating and dozing, seems to cast suspicious glances upon him and he prudently decides to propitiate her as a precaution. This he proceeds to accomplish after the usual self-denying mode of the male, Frau Litumlei being nothing loth. One fine morning, Herr Litumlei appears unusually exhilarated, whistling thro' his toothless gums, snapping his gnarled fingers and even carolling snatches of gay ditties in his quavering voice. He proposes that John should undertake a pleasure-trip of some eight months, for which he will provide lavish funds.

John starts on his travels, goes to Berlin, Vienna and Paris and finally condescends to visit Seldwyla. On his return to Augsburg, he finds his adopted father's house full of excitement, servants are running hither and thither, and strange sounds issue from Frau Litumlei's bedroom. Then Herr Litumlei bustles out and greets John in high glee. John inquires the reason of the rejoicings, and his dear kinsman informs him that Frau Litumlei has that morning given birth to a sturdy son and heir. Litumlei, seeing John's consternation, seeks to comfort him by declaring that, tho' he has altered his will, he intends to retain his former heir as preceptor to the newborn pretendant! John, aghast and furious at the result of his propitiation of Frau Litumlei, endeavour to enlighten the ancient cuckold, but the proud father, indignant at the aspersion of his

masculine powers, causes him to be impolitely expelled as a slanderer.

Crestfallen, John returns to Seldwyla and having saved a small sum from his former opulence, buys a smithy. Being an adroit fellow, he quickly learns the blacksmith's art, drives a prosperous trade and, as he hammers at his anvil, he reflects how, after all, it is only by honest work that a man can be the "smith of his own luck."

One must forgive this didactic finale for the sake of the humour of the rest of the story. Old Litumlei is a creation worthy to rank beside "*Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme*," John Kabys and Frau Litumlei are rather nebulous, but the whole *novelle* is very amusing.

"Clothes maketh Man" recounts the adventure of a Polish journeyman tailor, Wenzel Strapinski, who while trudging to seek work in Seldwyla, obtains a lift in an empty coach on its return from conveying some wealthy traveller to his destination. The coachman sets Wenzel down at the Seldwyla Inn and, before driving on, plays a trick on the innkeeper by pretending the itinerant tailor is a man of high rank who must be treated with every consideration. The innkeeper, thoroughly deceived, welcomes Wenzel effusively and serves him a luxurious supper. The tailor, weary and hungry, accepts everything like a man in a dream. His only worldly assets are a romantic appearance, a well-cut coat and a fine cloak, but these are enough to impress the obsequious innkeeper, who mistakes the young man's silence and timid manner for aristocratic reserve. The news of a distinguished visitor's arrival flies thro' the town and the citizens flock to wait on the nobleman. Wenzel, at first not understanding what is meant, answers their civilities politely and soon finds himself figuring as a Polish Count who, for political reasons, wishes to enjoy the seclusion of Seldwyla.

Keller works out the embroglio very plausibly. It is one of his qualities that, while we read, we never doubt his veracity, he convinces us that it has all actually happened. And afterwards, tho' we may smile at ourselves for having accepted such unlikelihood, even tho' presented so realistically, yet we

feel no irritation with Keller and are grateful to him for the hours of grey every-day life which he has shut out from us while we read. For, in spite of all the reasonings of the votaries of realism, we are but children who love a fairy tale, only we require it to take on the semblance of life. No fairy queens, magic gardens or princesses in glass coaches, no miraculous carpets, no elves and hobgoblins for us! But the phantastic charms us and romance holds an eternal lure for all, it only depends on the quality of their presentment whether, in our weary wisdom of culture, we joyfully accept the strangest plots or turn away in displeasure. Keller is a master in the art of wrapping the unlikely in the cloak of verisimilitude. All thro' "Clothes maketh Man" he never allows his hero to betray himself into a statement concerning his identity, Wenzel remains a straw on the flood of popular imaginings, it is his helpless silence before the Seldwyler's assumptions which lends consent to the deception. It is this which places the novelle on a far higher level than the story of an impostor and gives it psychological value. As the plot develops, Wenzel grows more and more intangled, and the Seldwylers, one by one, and each by unpremeditated additions to the current gossip, weave a detailed history of the "Count's" lineage, life and political importance. The web completely enmeshes Wenzel when he and Nettchen, the Seldwyla heiress, fall in love with one another. Throughout Keller ridicules the republican weakness for foreign aristocrats and lashes the mentality of small towns. Nettchen's father, while loudly asserting his democratic sentiments, is delighted to be able to bestow his daughter upon a nobleman!

Finally, Wenzel is unmasked by a rival suitor and the story takes a turn towards tragedy. Wenzel wanders away and faints in the snow. He is already half frozen, when Nettchen, who has followed to upbraid him, finds him and shakes him alive again. He confesses everything to her and she realises that he is no swindler, but a gentle, undecided creature, helpless in the toils of circumstance. She has learnt to love him for himself and she forgives him his involuntary deception and, despite her father's wrath, she insists on marrying him. They

set up a tailor's shop in Seldwyla and live out prosperous, contented lives.

"The Lost Smile" is too long to be considered as a novelle, its form is that of a novel. It is divided into chapters and embraces, not an episode in a lifetime, however decisive in the subject's destiny: the wooing and subsequent marriage history of Jukundus and Justine. Jukundus is his mother's only child, they are poor and when the mother sees that his heart is set upon Justine, the heiress, she rejoices, especially as she notices that the girl has a charming smile which resembles the smile which is Jukundus' chief attraction. The marriage takes place and Jukundus sets up in Seldwyla as a timber merchant. His misfortune begins with his reluctance to permit the felling of a big oak tree which he has purchased along with other timber. He loves the oak tree and to save it, buys the ground where it grows. The matter-of-fact Seldwylers are disgusted at a business man considering a tree from any point of view save as so much timber, costing so and so much. Henceforward they doubt Jukundus' business capacity, steady men look askance at him and he becomes the prey of cranks and fraudulent speculators. His business decreases until he is obliged to liquidate the firm. Even the plot of ground with the oak tree has to be sold. The young couple is offered a refuge in Justine's parents' house at Schwanau and Jukundus, penniless and defeated, is forced to accept. He and Justine are driving away from Seldwyla, when they see the oak tree being cut down. To Jukundus it is symbolical of his ruin, but Justine is too elated at the thought of enjoying the luxury of her old home, to notice her husband's sadness.

The account of the felling of the oak must appeal to every lover of trees. We find in many of Keller's poems his constant preoccupation with the woodlands; and the pages telling of the Seldwyla oak, show with what loving comprehension he thought of the individuality of trees. One feels that Keller has suffered what he expressed in "The Lost Smile", and we rage with him at the insolent stupidity of the Seldwylers, who make a raree show of the oak felling; we hate the yahoos who

clamber into those prone branches, which for untold generations have waved, triumphantly aloof, high beyond the reach of vulgarity and are now conquered, tragic in their helplessness. In one of his most beautiful poems, the "Waldlied," Meister Gottfried hymns oak trees:

"Arm in Arm and Kron' an Krone

Steht der Eichenwald verschlungen,

Heut hat er, bei guter Laune, mir sein altes Lied gesungen!"

He tells of the wind in the tress, of the rising storm and we hear the mighty melody:

"Und es lauschen still der junge Dichter und die jungen Finken,
Kauernd in den dunklen Büschen sie die Melodien trinken."

Alas! for the beauty of trees raped by human cupidity! Greedy man, or a fool war, destroy, in an hour, that which not "all their piety or wit" can restore, plant they never so industriously. Only the long years' uncountable rain drops, unnumbered sun-rays and soft breezes have patient power to rear these beloved giants, which millions love and murder. And yet nature inexhaustible gives and gives, while man, so soon exhausted, rends and tears down for ever.

Jukundus is ill at ease with his wife's family. He is employed in the firm, but he is afflicted with "a sort of unnatural stupidity" where business is concerned, he lacks the understanding of the subtle difference between permissible sharp-practice and cheating. It requires the trained eye of the real business man to perceive this line of demarcation, and many an honest tyro has found himself floundering in the morass of dishonesty, when he has only intended to pursue the lucrative path of sharp-practice wherein he sees others walking respected and prosperous. Jukundus however, has no such ambition and he is soon told that his father-in-law can dispense with his services. The mother-in-law, a finely characterised figure of complacent vulgarity, remarks that their "ship is large enough to carry a mere passenger," meaning that Jukundus can be taken along as a luxury. Justine, tho' she is disappointed at his failure in business, is blind to the humiliation under which Jukundus smart. She loves him, and she considers that ought

to be sufficient to make him happy, but both his smile and hers have lost something of the radiancy of former days.

Jukundus' refuge from his benefactor's kindness is the house of Justine's grandparents on the hill above Schwanau. These are delightful, simple-souled, placid old people, who have escaped their offspring's wealthy vulgarity. They like Jukundus and the old lady's chief anxiety is that she fears he is not religious. She has a talk with him on the subject and it is remarkable how Keller, far from letting this conversation grow tiresome, succeeds in giving us a glimpse into two souls, akin to each other because of their intrinsic honesty, altho' divided by generation and belief. There is a sentence in one of Keller's official proclamations (during the Staatsschreiber [time]) which cristallises his "Weltanschauung": "Alles Edle und Grosse ist einfacher Art" and the conversation between the grandmother and Jukundus, indeed the whole of the "Lost Smile" might be a parable on this maxim.

Justine falls under the influence of the Schwanau Pastor. In Keller's description of this personage we have his indictment of the clergy, which raised a storm of discussion in Switzerland and Germany. Keller was attacked by several pastors who, careless that their strictures tacitly acknowledged the truth of his portrait, accused him of slander and of personal spite.

Under the Schwanau pastor's influence, Justine plays at the lady bountiful both to the poor and to the church. She enriches the church with every kind of pseudo embellishment: crude stained glass windows, modern pictures, even the old ceiling is decorated with excruciating blue paint and golden stars. The venerable church, which had been wrecked by iconoclastic reformers and since kept gaunt and drear by the Calvinistic negation of beauty, now takes on the hideousness of modern provincial taste. Keller portrays the pastor in all his smug superiority; caricaturing his pretentious discourse, his misapplied quotations from famous authors, his oily sayings, and above all his intolerance. Justine becomes more and more self-righteous; she bids fair to grow into a tiresome, bigoted woman. The charm of her smile is almost gone. She tries to

persuade Jukundus to attend the church, but he, repulsed by the artificial atmosphere, restricts himself to escorting her home after the services. The pastor is incensed at this godless behaviour, and one evening he apostrophises Jukundus, who answers him frankly. Like most of his species, the pastor abhors frankness and an unpleasant argument takes place. This leads to an explanation between husband and wife and anger rends the cloak of refinement from the parvenu tradesman's daughter's speech. She uses rough common words, wounding Jukundus so deeply that he leaves her and returns to Seldwyla where he finds employment. This time it is honest straightforward work and he prospers, but his smile has vanished. Keller plunges him into politics and there are a few pages which are of minor interest today. Justine remains with her family and the pastor plays the chief rôle in her life. She is engrossed in charity and church-going, but she is unsatisfied and her famous smile wanes too. Then her father's business fails and the family is faced by comparative indigence. She "fears poverty as she would have feared a sharp sword" and in her distress she turns to the pastor for consolation. He tells her that, hearing certain investments and speculations mentioned in her parents' house, he has risked his wife's fortune in the same concerns and he too is ruined. He confesses that his ambition has been set on worldly things and he owns that his religion was all along a sham.

Everything has failed Justine, love and wealth are gone, religion and trust are shattered. Where can she find content? Who can give religion and happiness back to her? She remembers an old washerwoman and her invalid daughter who, despite poverty and ill-health, always seem to be absolutely happy. They belong to some obscure pietistic sect and Justine, still dreaming of finding the secret of happiness in dogma, decides to seek out these women and learn from them.

Meantime Jukundus has fallen in with a crew of shady politicians, who wield a measure of power by ferreting out scandals concerning rival politicians. Jukundus, honest and

guileless, is deceived by these rascals, he believes their bombastic talk of ideals and, in his inexperience, accepts their methods as necessary and habitual in political strife. He invites this disreputable gang to sup at the inn. The feast quickly degenerates into an orgy, but Jukundus excuses his guests, thinking that, poor and badly fed as they usually are, it is natural they should exceed when occasion offers. During supper they discuss the project of procuring compromising evidence against various political opponents and they depute Jukundus to collect this information, which they say is obtainable from an old woman who lives in a cottage outside Seldwyla. This hag is nicknamed das "Oelweib" (the oil wife) in allusion to the wise virgin in the Bible, the oil of whose lamp never failed; in other words, as these rogues see it, when their slanderous invention is exhausted, the "Oelweib" always has a last drop of the oil of calumny in the evil phial of her mind. Even this Jukundus accepts as a recognised political weapon!

The "Oelweib" is a secondary figure in the story, only a sketch in fact, but she is one of Keller's best known characters. She remains in our memory like some noisome fungus we have seen, this hideous, furtive hag with her horrible skill and loathly passion for libel. It chances that the "Oelweib" lives in the same delapidated cottage as the pietist washerwoman and her invalid daughter. Justine visits these pious women and pours out the story of her disappointment in religion. The washerwoman sets forth the tenets of her sect, which Justine finds as artificial and unsatisfying as the doctrines the Pastor of Schwanau had preached, and it dawns upon her that the secret of true religion and happiness has little to do with dogma. Can it be that love of humanity and glad acceptance of life mean more than all the doctrines, all the church services? She is pondering over this and the sectarian is meandering on, when they are startled by a scream from the adjoining room. The washerwoman hastens to open the door and they see the "Oelweib" struggling in a man's grasp. It is Jukundus, who, when fulfilling his promise to consult the hag, has been met with such a flood of scurrility, that roused to a fury of

disgust, he has caught the old traducer by the throat and is administering a well-deserved shaking! When Justine appears in the doorway, he releases the "Oelweib," feeling thoroughly ashamed of having yielded to his outbreak of temper. Justine leaves the cottage with him and, tho' the "Oelweib" shrieks imprecations and threats after them, they scarcely hear her for the glad song which is singing in their hearts. The next day they meet at the dear old grandparents' house on the hill. In a few lines Keller gives us an idyll of spring, of flowers and fruit blossom. It is Sunday and the sound of the church-bells is borne up to the hill-land on the gentle breeze. Justine and Jukundus find the smile upon each other's lips once more. Then he speaks his simple creed: not church-going, not dogma, not ambition nor wealth, but quiet enjoyment of the beauty of the world, brave acceptance of destiny. If the Eternal is so still and hidden, is it not best for us to be quiet and peaceful too? Peace and silence are not death but life, and a tranquil soul can meet all things worthily. The thought is very near to Keats' line: "Beauty is truth, truth beauty, that is all ye know on earth and all ye need to know."

It was inevitable that the "Lost Smile" should annoy the clergy and, from the day it was published, Keller was regarded as the adversary of the pious. Certainly his dislike of pastors was openly expressed not only in his writings, but in everyday life. There is an anecdote which illustrates how spontaneous and unpremeditated this aversion was. He was returning from a journey, when a fellow-traveller insisted on carrying the little old man's bag from the railway compartment to a cab. Keller asked his name: "Pastor so and so," came the answer. Keller looked the pastor up and down silently for a moment, then instead of thanks, came the grumble: "A pastor are you? Well, well, you don't look like one at least." It was afterwards explained to the offended gentleman that Keller, far from wishing to hurt his feelings, had intended to pay him a compliment! But Keller was old and very celebrated then and his foibles and gruff sayings were more than excused.

Even the pious could not withhold a smile when at a banquet given in honour of a distinguished theologian, Meister

Gottfried's toast ran thus: "Gentlemen! There are, I have remarked, two sorts of theologians: those who consider themselves above God Almighty and those who believe they are under Him. Our friend, Herr S., has always belonged to the latter sort and so I call upon you to drink his health!"

CHAPTER VI.

Regula. Gottfried Keller moves to the "Obere Bürgli." He resigns his Staatsschreibership.

The Züricher Novellen. Herr Jacques.

Hadlaub. The Fool of Manegg.

"Die Sieben Legenden" and the second volume of Seldwyla brought Keller not only fame, but a good sum of money, and thus in 1875 he determined to seek better quarters than the sombre official dwelling where he had laboured so long. His sister Regula was aghast at the idea. She worked early and late to keep the expenses within bounds, tolerated no servant's help, scrubbed and washed, ironed and darned and cooked unaided. Her beloved brother went spick and span with spotless linen and well brushed coat, but she was poorly clad, she remained the drudge. Grimly hard-working, she did not read, save on Sundays when she studied her Bible. Her brother's books meant nothing to her, Keller said he knew she never read them. Perhaps the old offence over the omission of mention of her in the "Grüne Heinrich" still rankled! Regula did not frequent the houses where her brother was an honoured guest. She lived at home like a gaunt household goddess, yet she liked a bit of gossip well enough, and in the market she collected the talk of the town and brought it back to tell to Meister Gottfried. There was no intellectual converse between these two old people, but the big, cultured brain appreciated Regula's homely chatter and knew that from her talk he could glean details and side-lights on character. Thus, while many pitied Keller for having to endure an ignorant old wife's clacking, he was listening attentively, and not without advantage, for he knew that gossip is psychology in undress. He set store on

Regula's shrewd estimate of people too, he was well aware that a woman of the people is often a better judge of human nature than a solitary genius, and often when some celebrity-hunter or inquisitive acquaintance found Keller's door closed to him, he little suspected that the drab old person, he had scarcely noticed on his former visits, had seen through him and enlightened her brother. Probably no one could have suited Keller better than this undecorative, little, old spinster, who made no demands on his time or sympathy, but contented herself with serving him all the days of her life. Loneliness becomes a habit and gradually a necessity, and after all, books are not only written at the writing-table, they grow during the long hours of undisturbed pondering which a solitary man can best enjoy, and into which the companionship of a wife or the voices of little children, tho' they would perhaps bring happiness, would inevitably bring interruption.

Keller made short work of those who tried to bolster up, the legend that he and his sister were a literary couple. Once a rash and gushing fool began expatiating upon how ideal a companionship theirs must be, and urged Keller to write a poem about Regula. "My sister suits me quite well," he answered gruffly, "but she does not inspire me."

By April 1875 Gottfried and Regula were settled in a comfortable square-built house on the "Obere Bürgli," one of the hills above Zürich.

"I am living like a king," he writes to a friend, "a great view and whole armies of clouds to see! Trees and fields—a lime-tree just below my window! If only I could stay at home all day, but I have to run up and down like a dog, the end of it will be I shall bark while I run! But the evenings! I stay at home and write before my open window, with the distant lake shimmering in the moonlight when the moon is full. But it is beautiful even when there are only a few stars over the lake and the hills! And everything is so still then, only my foolish self is awake—" What a picture of Meister Gottfried, self traced without self-consciousness! One can see the lonely little old man with the big head, the iron-grey hair flung back from the domed brow, and the vivid dark eyes looking

out through the large spectacles, as he sits at the broad table before the open window.

"I stay at home in the evenings now," he says, but there were interruptions to these quiet evenings, for Gottfried Keller still sought "that golden lion," the Rhine wine, and there are many anecdotes of how he staggered home thro' the dark streets after long hours in the tavern. He never lost his sense of humour nor his repartee, even when the "golden lion" had been over-kind to him! One night, he hailed a passer-by: "Hi! you there! tell me where I live!"

The man answered: "Oh! you are Herr Gottfried Keller!"

"I know that, you calf!" Keller growled, "I did not ask you who I am, I asked you where I live!"

A new collection of novellen was in hand when the oddly assorted couple moved to the house on the hill, the "Züricher Novellen." In 1874 Rodenbach had offered to publish some stories in the *Deutsche Rundschau* and the comedy between Keller and his publisher recommenced, but in a modified form, for Meister Gottfried had learned much in the years of official drudgery; nevertheless it lasted some three years before the manuscript reached Rodenbach. But there was an excuse for Keller this time: it is no little thing to toil all day in an office and only to have the evenings for the real work of life. It is a good deal to ask of a man's strength, and the brain, clogged with the dust of uncongenial labour, is forced to a mighty effort when the beloved work is resumed. It is not alone the mental fatigue of other occupations, but the broken threads of thought which have to be rewoven are so perilously brittle. We have little idea of how cruel it is to hold back a writer from his work, we cannot gauge the agony it often is. And time it is so short, the hours are never long enough! Perhaps one of the saddest sentences on earth is the doom: *ars longa vita brevis*. Keller once wrote in a letter: "As it is I shall scarcely have time to write what I could—what I ought to write." These words were written in defence of his decision to relinquish his official appointment. He had served the state for over fourteen years and he was fifty-five. It was not repose or idleness he claimed, but a little span of time to fulfil the

task which his genius set him. And so he took the decision—and Regula disapproved. It is all very well to be disapproved of by absent friends, however beloved, or by a whole world of outside critics, but the disapproval of a constant companion is like an irritating, continuous noise! Yet in spite of Regula's disapproval, Meister Gottfried resigned the Staatsschreibership in 1876.

The last act of his official life resembled the first, although, like most things in the world, time had brought modification. The supper to Lassalle, which had been the prelude to Keller's entry into official life, found an echo at the farewell banquet which the Zürich Cantonal government gave in honour of the Herr Staatsschreiber's resignation from office. It was the conventional official banquet with the inevitable speeches leading up to the ceremonious presentation of a fine silver bowl to the Herr Staatsschreiber, in token of the Government's esteem and respect. But Meister Gottfried was celebrating his release from the trammels of official life, and however flattering it all was meant to be, he revolted. He called for the best wine in the cellar of the Zürich Hotel, filled the presentation bowl to the brim and passed it round as a loving-cup to the assembled dignitaries. More and more wine was brought and decorum and dulness were drowned in good cheer. It became rather more than good cheer as the night wore on. "They were all very patient with me," Keller wrote to a friend, describing the evening, "but I don't believe they would have presented me with the bowl the next day!" Thus Gottfried Keller, obedient to his innate sense of literary form, ended his term of official life with the same too lavish homage to Bacchus with which he had begun it!

With the exception "*Das Fähnlein der Sieben Aufrechten*," which was published in this series, the "*Zürcher Novellen*" are all historical. They are strung together by a narrative which in itself is slight and rather tiresome, showing once more Keller's trend to pedagogic thought. This is the story of Herr Jacques who is obsessed with the ambition to be original and to become an author. The callow youth is sauntering along the river bank taking notes of details he intends to use in a literary

masterpiece, when he comes upon a number of old men who have assembled to practise mortar-shooting. This is an annual celebration in memory of the old fellows' artillery training and it culminates in a substantial meal, where old songs are sung, old poems recited and where the veterans retell the anecdotes of their youth. Among this company is Herr Jacques' godfather, who, seeing the boy standing about, invites him to join in the feasting. Jacques' portentous mien puzzles him, until the wine loosens Jacques' tongue and he confides his secret ambition. His godfather listens to what the boy has to say and then abruptly proposes to take him for a walk. They go up the hill and when they reach the ruins of Castle Manegg, the old man sits down and talks to his godson, saying that originality is only of use if it leads to the creation of fine original work. Then he tells him that one of the most beautiful books in the world was made by a young man who, instead of starting out as an author, was content to be the scribe of poets and thereby had met his life's love and had become a true poet. Thus is ushered in the novelle "Hadlaub" and if Herr Jacques enjoyed hearing the story one half as much as thousands of readers have enjoyed reading it, he must have spent a very pleasant evening.

Hadlaub was the scribe and chief illuminator of the *Manesse Codex*, the fourteenth century chronicle of a thousand and thirty eight "Minnelieder" (love songs) taken from the famous poets of the preceding centuries: from Walter von der Vogelweide; Heinrich von Ofterdingen; Biterolf; Wolfram von Eschenbach; Duke Heinrich von Breslau; King Wenzel of Bohemia; the eight songs of the Emperor Heinrich VI, Richard Coeur de Lion's gaolor; the poems of the Austrian Knight of Kürenberg; of Hartmann von Aue; of Meister Gottfried von Strassburg; of poor chivalrous Conradin, the last of the Hohenstaufens; and finally the songs of Meister Johannes Hadlaub himself, when love of a woman and faithful labour as a scribe had taught him the gentle art of poesy. Each Minnesinger's counterfeits is emblazoned on a page opposite his songs, a glory of colour and quaint heraldic detail. When the Manesse family became extinct, the book came into the possession of

the Hohensax barons and then, in the early seventeenth century, it was bought for the Heidelberg library by the bibliophile Palsgrave Friedrich IV, father of Friedrich V, the unfortunate Winter King. When the Thirty Years War swept over Germany, the Heidelberg library was dispersed and the Codex vanished. Then, in the middle of the eighteenth century, it reappeared in the King's Library in Paris, it was then bound in red leather and emblazoned with the arms of Louis XV. At the Ashburnham sale in 1888, a Strassbourg book dealer purchased various ancient French manuscripts which had been stolen from France and had found their way to Lord Ashburnham's library. These he offered France in exchange for the Manesse Codex and, his bargain concluded, he sold the Codex back to Heidelberg, where it is still.

The novelle "Hadlaub" is the story of the poet-scribe as he tells it himself in his songs, with a wealth of detail gleaned by Gottfried Keller in Zürich chronicles. The dry-as-dusts have taken exception to this or that, have puzzled over whether it was this Prince Abbess (Fürstäbtissin) who had the love story with Heinrich of Klingenberg, Bishop of Constance, or was it another lady? As to whether it was Count Wernher of Homberg the celebrated Ghibelline warrior, who played the part Keller assigns to him, or was the old chronicle at fault and was it another knight? For my part I prefer the pages where men live and I can visualise them, whether I find them in untrustworthy ancient chronicles or in delightful story-books, to all the science of history! The vision of a poet teaches me more of bygone ages than a pedant's treatise.

"Hadlaub" opens with the story of the Prince-Abbess Kunigunde. She had an ill-favoured sister Mechtildis, who, hoping to acquire the heritage of Schwarz Wasserstelz to add to her domain of Weiss Wasserstelz, tried her best to force Kunigunde into a convent. Kunigunde, to escape her sister's persecution, shut herself into her castle which was three parts surrounded by the hurrying waters of the Rhine. Mechtildis lived a short way upstream in her castle of Weiss Wasserstelz.

After some years, strange news was whispered about the countryside: some men fishing beneath the walls of Schwarz

Wasserstelz had heard the wailing of a new-born infant. It was remembered how a giant figure had been seen at nights scaling the castle walls, and it was said that such visits coincided with the presence in the neighbourhood of Heinrich of Klingenberg, Chancellor to the Emperor Rudolf, a strong man and, so the peasants said, a necromancer. All this was only delectable gossip, from Schwarz Wasserstelz came no word of confirmation or denial. Then some eight years later, the Lady Kuni-gunde appeared in Zürich with a beautiful little girl of eight years old. The lady took the veil and shortly afterwards was elected Prince-Abbess (Fürst-Äbtissin) of Zürich, and many people said that her election was due to the influence of Chancellor Heinrich, who, meanwhile, had become a priest and been made Lord Bishop of Constance.

The child Fides was entrusted to the care of Sir Rüdiger Manesse in whose household she lived happily, often visited by her affectionate patrons, the Lord Bishop of Constance and the Prince-Abbess of Zürich. The secret of the child's parentage was everybody's secret, but people were less squeamish in those days and besides the Chancellor Bishop was not a man to brook impertinence, nor, for that matter, was the Prince-Abbess in the habit of allowing insolent remarks to go unpunished.

Keller gives us one of his idyllic scences of childhood when we are introduced to Fides. One spring evening she is out with old Konrad von Mure, the Master of the Zürich Choir, a scholar and musician and a firm friend of Sir Rüdiger Manesse. The frail, old scholar and the restless, eager, little girl come to a peasant's house on the hill, where Master Konrad is greeted as an old friend by peasant Hadlaub and his buxom wife. They sit in a vine-clad arbour and, while Fides drinks a mug of milk, a beaker of golden cider is set before Master Konrad. They have sat there a few minutes when, from the wood near-by, a clear voice is heard singing like a lark. It is peasant Hadlaub's son, Johannes, driving a herd of cows home from the meadow. The little fellow is bare-foot, he wears a blue linen tunic, and with his fair hair falling upon his shoulders and the glow of the setting sun behind him, he looks like some

little saint in an illumined missal. Johannes joins the group in the harbour and, quite unabashed, gives the old scholar his hand, but he stares in astonishment at Mistress Fides, after the way of timid bairns with other children. For a moment Fides gazes back at him unconcernedly over the rim of the mug, then she puts it down saying calmly: "Oh! you stupid boy!" and once more buries her nose in the mug. Johannes turns away with quivering lips, but his mother draws him to her and comforts him, while Master Konrad scolds Fides so sharply that she begins to cry. Then the homely peasant mother interferes and tells Johannes to take their little guest down to the brook to gather a wreath of forget-me-nots for her hair, and, like two butterflies, the children flit across the meadows together, reconciled and happy. They pluck handfuls of forget-me-nots, white star-flowers and spindly pink ragged-robin; and then my Lady Fides wishes to cross the brook, but, afraid of wetting her fine leather shoes, she commands her small henchman to carry her across. He is not much bigger than she, yet he performs his task gallantly and she clings round his neck fearful of slipping into the water.

"Ich diene sit daz wir beidiu waren kint," he sang long afterwards.

Up in the harbour, Master Konrad is discussing the boy's future with his parents. Johannes sings in the choir and the old musician has noticed his rare aptitude for music and book learning. If peasant Hadlaub will entrust the boy to him, he will make a clerk of him, perhaps some day a scholar and musician. The peasants demur, but when Johannes comes back from the brook and Master Konrad asks him if he will become a clerk, the lad, thinking that perhaps at school he will see other little ladies like Fides, cries out that he wants to go with Master Konrad. Thus it falls out that the peasant boy is taken into the choir school, studies latin and music and learns scholarly ways.

Eight years go past and Johannes Hadlaub has grown into a slim youth. He is a clever scribe and the learned priest, Johannes Manesse, employs him to copy ancient legends and inscribe Minnelieder. Hadlaub loves the songs he copies and

often, of an evening, sings them for his comrades to the music of his fiddle.

One day, the priest bids him make ready to accompany him to the Court of Manesse, as Sir Rüdiger's tall stone-house was called in Zürich. Hadlaub is to take his fiddle with him for there are some knights and ladies who would fain hear a few songs.

Young Hadlaub is a little abashed when he finds so great a company assembled in Sir Rüdiger's hall. There is my Lord Bishop, the Imperial Chancellor, Heinrich of Klingenberg, sitting near the Prince-Abdess of Zürich, my Lady Kunigunde, who has discarded her nun's garb this evening and wears rich worldly robes of velvet; there is Count Friedrich of Toggenburg, a descendant of the Minnesinger Toggenburg, whose songs Hadlaub knows so well; there is a Lord of Trostberg, grandson of the Minnesinger Trostberg; and Sir Jakob von Wart, a poet and singer himself; and lastly Sir Rüdiger, one of the most ardent votaries of Minnelieder in the Empire. The table is littered with books, rolls of parchment and illuminated vellum pages, treasures from Sir Rüdiger's library. It is a pleasant picture of a mediæval company that Keller draws for us. There is much talk of poets and singers and it is delightful to vision those far off figures of the mediæval minstrels, as we listen to the easy converse in the Court of Manesse.

Hadlaub sings Duke Heinrich of Breslau's lament:

"Dir klag ich, Mai, ich klag Dir's Sommerwonne"

and the Prince-Abdess, the Chancellor Bishop and the rest sigh over the gentle poet's early death, of which they have but just heard. Then Jakob von Wart gives Hadlaub the script of one of his own songs to read, and the dear old words ring out:

"In rehter schoene ein morgen sterne
Ist min frowe, der ich gerne
Diene und iemer dienen vil."

My Lord Bishop of Constance is so moved thereby that

he takes the fiddle from Hadlaub and, forgetful that he has just averred a churchman may not sing of love, he sings Trostberg's song:

“Rosen rot ist ir das Lachen
 Der vil lieben frowen min;
 Was kunde er wonders an ir machen
 Der ir gab so liechten schin!
 Si ist min Herzen osterspil
 Iemer mere unz an min Ende
 Min Herze von ir niht envil!”*

The Chancellor Bishop's eyes linger upon the Prince-Abbess's face while he sings, and she flushes deeply but smiles back at him. After Master Jacob von Wart has sung one of his own ditties, the Chancellor calls for something by Walther von der Vogelweide. Of course, Hadlaub knows most of the songs of the greatest Minnesinger of all, Herr Walther the Wanderer, the sweetest singer of women's lips—"ir roter munt der so lieplichen lachet." Hadlaub's fresh voice warbles Herr Walther's verse which defies old-age, telling how none can resist the love spirit which stirs all hearts in the month of May:

“Swar er vert in siner wunne
 dan ist nieman alt.”

Then quickly, for fear the mention of old-age should have saddened the company, Hadlaub swings into the rhyme where Meister/Walther asks how/a woman can favour him who is so far from being the handsomest among men? And they all laugh at the self-depreciation voiced by Hadlaub, who, with his beardless faced flushed and his eyes aglow, seems but too well fitted to catch a woman's fancy. Then Hadlaub strikes up Herr Walther's daring equivocal ditty with the "tandaradei" refrain:

* I have ventured to give the old song in the original Middle High German, instead of in Keller's modernisation where it loses some of its quaint charm.

"Unter der linden
 an der heide,
 da unser zweier bette was
 dâ muget ir vinden,
 schône beide
 gebrochen bluomen unde grass,
 vor dem walde in einem tal—
 tandaradei!"

The company is delighted with Hadlaub, and there and then the plan of the Codex is mooted. Sir Rüdiger brings out a number of manuscripts from his treasure-kists, books and parchments. There are Herr Wolfram von Eschenbach's "Parzival" and Hartmann von Aue's "Arme Heinrich," his "Erek" and his "Iwein," and Gottfried von Strassburg's "Tristan and Isolde" that great story of love and destiny. Herr Rüdiger shows these treasures and Hadlaub, from behind one of the tall oaken chairs, peers at them with awe and longing.

There is a heavy volume which Sir Rüdiger carries reverently, for it is no less than the "Schwabenspiegel," the precious book of mediæval law and custom, which he says the priests have lent him from the Cathedral library. Herr Rüdiger reads out the moralising colophon which ends: "May God grant us so to love the right and to hate and weaken the wrong in this world, that we may enjoy the right, there where body and soul are separate."

"That is a fair motto," says a soft voice and Hadlaub turns to find Mistress Fides standing near. She is tall and beautiful, but a hint of melancholy shadows her eyes making her gaze almost sombre. She nods coldly to Hadlaub and returns to the group of young maidens who have stood apart from the graver company during the evening. Then Herr Rüdiger speaks out the desire of his heart: "Alas! too many fair songs are lost, these we have safe on parchment, but there are many which only live in the people's memory; why not pluck them like flowers and let them bloom for ever in the pages of a book? Taking blossoms too from the famous Minnesingers; save all that may be saved of these flowers of song?" Hadlaub, whom

Priest Johannes Manesse has proved to be a faithful scribe, is there and then chosen as "herald and marshal of song!" He is young enough, Herr Rüdiger says, to undertake so arduous if delightful a labour, it will be the work of all his days, even if death forgets him for many years.

Young Hadlaub, as one in a dream, goes out from Herr Rüdiger's hall, his life's task laid upon him. Yet dream or no dream, he does not forget to look round for Mistress Fides, for all she has greeted him so coldly, but he sees naught of her and he knows she has gone back to the "Kemenate" where the women of a mediæval patrician household lived in strict seclusion.

Hadlaub goes with the Chancellor Bishop to his see at Constance and is shown many manuscripts from which he is to reap his harvest of song. Among others he makes copies from the Chronicle which later was named the Weingartner Codex because, for a time, it was in the monastery at Weingarten.* Hadlaub is a good scribe, he loves his work and it progresses apace. Then one day the Chancellor Bishop sends him to Zürich with a letter for the "Prince-Abbess" and this gives Gottfried Keller the opportunity of an enchanting description of the Lady Kunigunde and her ladies at work upon a vast figured tapestry.

My Lord of Klingenberg has written that he is anxious about Fides who, since she has known the secret of her birth, seems melancholy and oppressed. Would it not be wise to give her a young and gay companion? Klingenberg has watched Hadlaub and found him a simple, gentle soul. Why not have him taken into the Manesse household as the child's playmate? He would doubtless cheer Fides with his songs and fiddle tunes. The Prince-Abbess reads the Chancellor Bishop's letter, a smile upon her lips and then, with that tender mockery which women so often bestow upon the men they love, she murmurs: "Oh! Heinrich! Imperial Chancellor and reverent and learned Bishop—how foolish thou art!"

The ladies are teasing Hadlaub, and Fides, who is among

* It is now in Stuttgart.

them, looks on laughing. Hadlaub, nettled at the bantering tone, announces that the Bishop has created him "Marshal of all Love Songs," whereupon one of the ladies demands how a bishop can have anything to do with love music? Fides flushes scarlet and a tear falls upon the tapestry she is embroidering. A strained silence comes over the group, for the ladies are conscious of their tactlessness. Then the Prince-Abbess, her cheeks aflame too, hastens into the breach, and, to cover the confusion, dismisses Hadlaub, who goes off perplexed yet penitent, feeling he has somehow offended Mistress Fides.

At time goes on, Hadlaub thinks more and more about Fides. His work brings him often to the Court of Manesse, but he seldom catches a glimpse of her. He has learned the secret of her birth, heard how much she takes it to heart and that she has grown sad and silent since she has known of it. The knowledge of Fides' sorrow awakens something deeper in Hadlaub's soul than the thought of making her the goddess of his inspiration according to the custom of the day; altho' the idea of a peasant's son, albeit a scribe and scholar, daring to aspire even to the bastard daughter of such great people seems mad presumption to him.

"Ich war so gerne froh,
Nun kann's nicht schlimmer sein,
Ich minne gar zu hoch
Und sie begehrt nicht mein!"

he sings in a poem which long afterwards he included in the Manesse Codex.

The celebrated scene at the mass is taken from one of the pictures in the Codex. Hadlaub has decided to give Fides the declaration of his passion in a poem, and when she leaves the church he follows her and pins the missive to her cloak. Gottfried Keller succeeds in making us feel as tho' we too walked in that fourteenth century world of towers and turrets, the hours announced and the routine of life governed by bell ringing; a world of women in strange head-dresses and girdled tunics; of knights and patricians, puissant abbesses, wandering minnesingers and their gracious, beloved ladies; but thro' it

all the human note, the changes of sunshine and cloud, the mortal hopes and failings are brought vividly before us.

One spring day Hadlaub, restless with yearning for the lady of his song, who has become all too much the lady of his heart, goes off to sing his love-ditty in the woods. Never an answer has he got to the letter he pinned to Mistress Fides' cloak, and he feels like one who, calling into a forest where there should be an echo, is answered only by chill silence.

He saunters into the woods above Zürich. Finding a little dell between tall beech trees, he sits down upon the moss and sings the words he has written to Mistress Fides in the letter:

“Ich war so gerne froh
Nun kann's nicht schlimmer sein,
Ich minne gar zu hoch
Und sie begehrt nicht mein.”

He sings some ballads but he always returns to his own love-song. After a time he pauses, musing how the melody is fair enough—alas! if he could but sing it to sweet Mistress Fides of the shadowed eyes! Even as he is thinking this he is startled by a woman's laugh, and it is only then he notices he has strayed close to the castle of Biberlinsburg, and that, in a window, just above him, is a bevy of ladies who must have heard his songs. He sees that these ladies are craning their pretty necks and peering hither and thither in search of the troubadour. He sits very still and then he espies a shimmer of silk and brocades thro' the green of the trees. The ladies have come down from their tower and are dancing on the sward singing a gay tune. Hadlaub takes his fiddle and plays the lilting melody softly, then, growing bolder, he rises and, still playing, approaches the dancers, but when the ladies catch sight of him they break away with cries of mock alarm and escape into the wood.

Hadlaub stands abashed, fiddle in hand, for he has seen his dear lady among the others. He thinks he has offended her once more and, much downcast, he tucks his fiddle under his arm and walks away dejectedly. Poor fool, if he had stayed he would have heard whispered laughter among the trees

which grows louder when the hidden ones see which path he has chosen all unwittingly, for thither it is that Mistress Fides has fled!

Hadlaub hastens on until he is suddenly confronted by the dear one of his thoughts, who is returning along the narrow pathway whereon he is. At sight of her, he is assailed by such rapturous fear, that he can utter no word and only his deathly palor and his trembling betray his anguish of delight. And Mistress Fides steps proudly past him "without a greeting, oh! alas!" as he says in the poem wherein he tells of his adventure.

As tho' this meeting with his beloved had unsealed the font of his inspiration, he composes poem after poem, and these, according to the manner of lovers and the approved fashion of the Minnesinger, he smuggles to Mistress Fides in the Court of Manesse. No answer reaches him, even tho' it would have been the correct mode of the "Minne" had the lady responded by witty or mocking verses; but as there comes no reproof from her guardians, Hadlaub ventures to entertain a mad hope of his suit and the poems grow more passionate, less conventional, less the pawns of a modish intellectual game.

Mistress Fides meantime is grieving that it should be so, for she has taken an honest liking to her love-sick scribe and she will not play with his heart. She confides her dilemma to Sir Rüdiger who, when he has read the verses, chides her for her foolishness. What! forbid a poet to write poetry? Hamper a Minnesinger with such prosaic objections? The demon of all collectors' souls is blinding Sir Rüdiger, who sees no danger for young hearts in it all, but merely the advent of a new Minnesinger, deploying the time-honoured artifice of feigned passion in song. It is only a pleasant custom—and the poems are passing good.

Fides, having found no comprehension in her guardian, confides the matter to the knight's sensible strong-minded wife. This is a figure which Gottfried Keller evidently revelled in drawing: a shrewd, matter of fact matron who looks after the house assiduously, and is learned in baking, cooking and brewing, learned too in managing her romantic old husband whom she loves, yet with whom she constantly and conscientiously

disagrees, believing him to be an amiable dotard. "Tut! Tut! no nonsense here! We do not live in an enchanted castle in the midst of a magician's garden! No silly conceits of Minnesingers and the like shall go on in my house!" Such is the gist of the good dame's remarks and she proposes to take charge of these fond rhymes in future, and Fides must pay no heed to such out of date vagaries. But the lady is counting without her husband and the Chancellor Bishop who, as we have seen, is as daft about Minne-songs as Sir Rüdiger himself. My Lord Bishop, chancing to arrive at the Court of Manesse that very day, takes precisely the same view as his host, to wit: that the whole thing is only the gentle custom of the "hohe Minne," that it is just as it should be, and the more love-ditties Hadlaub pens to Mistress Fides the better. And as for a scribe of his walk in life daring to dream of more than the writing of poems to a high-born damsel, why! the very notion is preposterous! For a hundred years the Minnesingers have all hymned the beauty of unattainable mistresses. Surely, it is half the amazing charm of the art of the "Minne" that it is all a dream-world untouched by harsh reality? Thus arguing, the Bishop is quite undisturbed by anxiety concerning Fides and her poet. He takes aside his daughter (in Christ, of course, only) and lays his injunction upon her not to dash a poet's fancy, to keep the poems carefully and to hand them over to Sir Rüdiger, as they are treasures of poesy. Mistress Fides, counselled in opposing ways by her elders, makes up her mind to do as she herself thinks best, viz: to keep the poems, not to encourage Hadlaub by word or look, but certainly not to let any single one of her troubadour's songs get into the Lady of Manesse's clutches, for the good dame's sharp common sense has been somewhat of an acid draught to Mistress Fides' young vanity.

Two years slip by, Hadlaub is no longer a smooth faced youth, a short clipped beard makes him look a very presentable man. His poems too have increased in beauty, as Sir Rüdiger, who gets what Mistress Fides elects to give him, sees with satisfaction. The book of song is growing steadily, and Hadlaub has been given a fellow-worker, a Florentine painter who

helps with the illumination of the Minnesingers' pictures, imaginary portraits for the most part, but excellent in detail and colour.

Then one day, the Chancellor Bishop bids a goodly company to a falcon hunt and the two votaries of the "Minne" decide that Sir Rüdiger is to entertain the hunters at a banquet in his castle of Manegg on the hill beyond Zürich, and afterwards the new chronicle is to be exhibited. The Lady of Manesse is averse to this plan, she has become a degree over-severe since, by mistake, one of Hadlaub's verses fell into her hands. Of all his poems it is the least calculated to win the honest lady's favour, for it consists in a diatribe against those who spy upon Mistress Fides and her faithful songster, and ends with an exhortation to the devil to take these persons and to put out their inquisitive eyes! Obviously Dame Manesse is the only person who can be meant, as everyone else, even the Prince-Abbess, has chosen to adopt Sir Rüdiger's line on the subject, and Hadlaub is made much of as a highly promising Minnesinger.

The falcon hunt and the banquet take place and afterwards Sir Rüdiger leads his guests to a wide hall where tall chairs and long settles stand against the walls, and in the midst is a broad oaken table, whereon are many parchment pages in silken coverings. Hadlaub hands them page by page to Sir Rüdiger, calling out the name of the Minnesinger whose portrait each bears, and Sir Rüdiger passes the drawings on to the ladies and prelates and knights, so that the hall soon resembles a church wherein a choir of gorgeously apparelled singers is studying the text of some fair chant.

Such a splendour of gold leaf and scarlet, of blue and carmine is in these portraits of the Minnesingers! There is the Emperor Henry VI in royal robes, and young Konradin of Hohenstaufen in hunting tunic with a falcon on his wrist, yet with a golden crown upon that brave head which fell upon the dust of the mercato in Naples, when the poor boy was done to death by foulest treachery. Hadlaub murmurs the line of Konradin's verse:

"Ich enweis niht, frowe, was minne sint,"

While the knights and prelates consecrate a sigh, perhaps

some of the ladies a tear, as tribute to the last Hohenstaufen's piteous fate.

There is a picture of King Wenzel of Bohemia to face his poems, it is one of the quaintest of Hadlaub's imaginary portraits. But how is this? A Palsgrave with so sweet and womanly a face? And surely Duke Heinrich of Breslau's features are almost the same? And this knight too is so like—so like— They have it! Fides! Let it pass, for poets have such dream-filled eyes, they only see what best they love—and yet 'tis wiser not to make remark perhaps! Who knows, the youth may not have meant to limn her features? It may be but a trick of the heart which guided his brush!

So they pass on to other portraits, to Hartmann von Aue on a prancing caparisoned steed with birds' heads parsemé on his shield; Heinrich von Veldeck looking very pensive, and Gottfried von Strassbourg who sang of "Isolde with the snow-white hands;" Walter von der Vogelweide is there:

"Ich saz ûf eime steine
Und dahte bein mit beine
Dar ûf sazt' ich den ellenbogen;
Ich hete in mîne hant gesmogen
Daz kinne und ein min wange."

Portrayed by Hadlaub after this description of himself, Herr Walther is seated on a stone with crossed legs, elbow on knee and leaning his chin and one cheek in his hand. Then there is "Frauenlob" called thus because he sang only in praise of women and he is pictured with a band of adoring ladies. They loved him so that they bore him in their gentle hands to his tomb in the cloisters of Mainz, where his rapt, ardent face still peers at us from out a half ruined gravestone.

A clear laugh rings thro' the hall and Fides shows one of the parchments to another lady. It is the portrait of Hartmann von Aue with the birds' heads on shield and caparison, while from his helmet rises a cock's head of inordinate size. It is not one of Hadlaub's masterpieces, though nowadays we prize it for its quaintness, but Fides, judging it with the ruthless eyes of the contemporary, pronounces it a fool thing. The

luckless picture is passed from hand to hand amid a gale of laughter, while Hadlaub stands silent, his elation and pride dashed; but Fides, like many a woman before and since, finds pleasure in wounding, and catching sight of the painting of the Minnesingers at the "Sängerstreit on the Wartburg" her laughter starts afresh. Indeed it is a little comic, this picture in the Codex, for the seven minstrels, crowded together on the narrow bench, look cramped and anxious, their hands held at the most amazing angles. Walther von der Vogelweide, crushed between Old Reinmar and Heinrich von Rispach, looks dolorous and appealing; while Herr Biterolf and Heinrich von Ofterdingen are actually sitting upon Wolfram von Eschenbach, who seems oppressed but patient. Only Klingsor of Hungary, in the centre, has room to sit at ease. Fides says it is like a game the village children play, where the end ones on a bench try to squeeze the occupants of the middle, and the midmost spread themselves out in order to push the end ones off.

Poor Hadlaub, the laughter beats on his brain, he is bewildered and his heart aches as with physical pain. How can she treat him so, when his only fault is that he loves her?

"Ich minne gar zu hoch."

The words come to him and he sees himself a presumptuous fool, a laughing stock for these fine ladies, these haughty prelates and debonair knights! He takes up a parchment page, looks at it furtively, surely she can find nothing ridiculous in this one? It is the portrait of Meister Gottfried von Strassbourg — a beautiful thing of glowing colour. In a voice which even to himself sounds toneless and flat, he calls the name, but a diversion is created by Sir Rüdiger, who comes forward with a book in his hand and announces: "The Love Songs of Meister Johannes Hadlaub." The old knight has collected the poems to Fides and has copied them in his careful scholarly writing. He informs the company that these poems having found favour with the Zürich Council, it is decreed that Johannes Hadlaub, Scribe, is to be raised to the rank of Master. The ceremony of crowning the new Minnesinger is to take place

immediately and the chaplet is to be laid upon his brow by the Lady Fides of Schwarz Wasserstelz.

Hadlaub struck dumb with astonishment hangs back, and Fides with cheeks aflame springs up and makes for the door, but the Bishop Chancellor takes Hadlaub by the arm and brings him forward, while the knights and ladies hinder Fides' escape and lead her to her tall chair wherein they hold her prisoner. Hadlaub is led to her and told to kneel. He sinks down at her feet with tremulous rapture—indeed so blissful a weakness has come over him that had two knights not supported him he would have fallen to the ground. Fides half reluctantly places the chaplet of laurel leaves on Hadlaub's brow, and one of the knights taking the new Master Minstrel's hand lays it in Fides' palm. Like a vice Hadlaub's fingers close over her hand. Fides sits motionless, while Hadlaub's eyes gaze passionately into her face, where for the first time with delicious nearness he sees the beauties he has so often hymned: the red, red mouth, the delicate moulding of the cheeks, the clear, beloved eyes, the milk-white throat! His fingers press her hand so close—so close—clinging as tho' his life depended upon his grip! He does not feel how the little fingers flutter and struggle in his grasp, he forgets how in his passion he is crushing her hand painfully. To the others it seems but play-acting, the fitting "Finis" to his songs. A murmur breaks forth and the ladies and knights clap their hands. Fides tosses her head like some Arab courser which the bridle irks, while her eyes defy the applauding onlookers; then she turns towards Hadlaub and tries desperately to free herself, but he holds fast in a frenzy of delight. Then she bends down and sets her white teeth fiercely in his hand!

As though the sudden pain had waked him from a dream, he drops her hand and, springing up, would have escaped from the throng. Afterwards in his poem he averred her bite had not wounded, but only enraptured him:

"Ir bizen was so zartlich, wiplich, fin,
Des mir we tet, daz so schiere zergangen was;
Mir wart nie braz, danz moez war sin!"

He is stayed in his flight by the Bishop Chancellor, who oblivious of his daughter's biting exploit, (he had snatched a moment's tranquil converse with the Prince-Abbess) lays a kindly touch on the new Master Minstrel's shoulder, and bids my Lady Fides bestow some gift upon her poet in memory of the day.

"A pleasant custom of the Minne, Fides child," says the Bishop Chancellor.

To everyone's surprise, Fides gives Hadlaub a little carven ivory needlecase, which is known to be one of her most cherished possessions. Strange, wayward maiden! So harsh to her poet and then so unexpectedly generous?

Hadlaub was sent on a journey through Austria to collect courtly and pleasant songs, but who can control a poet's fancy? He turned from the conventional mode of the chivalrous Minne and sought out ditties of the peasantry telling of the life of the fields, of village rejoicings and rough country ways. The influence of Niedhart von Reuenthal was still potent in Austrian song-craft, altho' Master Niedhart was dead fifty years and more. Hadlaub, for all he was a scribe and Master Minnesinger, adorant too of a high-born dame, had good red peasant blood in his veins and being a little home-sick perhaps, he felt drawn to the simpler songs which reminded him of his childhood in his father's homestead. At any rate, besides collecting Master Niedhart's rural verses, he wrote the "Harvest Songs" which are about the best things he ever made. They are redolent of the soil and a sturdy coarseness gives them something of primitive human nature which no book-learning could have taught him. Gottfried Keller brings this in with his unerring instinct for the colour of the century, for the "Minne" proper was moribund when Hadlaub lived, it was becoming the fastidious dream of the scholarly, while the reign of the folksong was drawing near. Keller has an interesting figure in the wandering minstrel with whom Hadlaub makes friends and who leads him to a village revel. The aged minstrel is discreetly symbolical of the folksong: no one knows his name, he himself has forgotten it, but his songs are the treasures of the simple.

When Hadlaub comes back to Zürich, he finds Mistress Fides being wooed by Count Wernher von Homberg, a man of high rank and much repute in warfare. This arrogant personage glares at the gentle Master Minnesinger and behaves to him with aristocratic insolence; while many of the knights, who had formerly been friendly enough to the Bishop Chancellor's favorite poet, now think fit to follow Count Wernher's example and to treat poor Hadlaub to supercilious looks. It is whispered that Count Wernher's intentions are not strictly honourable, in other words that, though his eyes betray his desire of sweet Mistress Fides, he will never wed an ill-dowered damsel, for knight of renown though he is, his purse is a starveling.

Hadlaub, racked with love and jealousy, sends his dear lady passionate songs again but, as usual, no answer comes to him and Fides is more secluded than ever in the Court of Manesse, altho' report has it that Count Wernher sees her but too often. Then one day when Hadlaub is strolling at dusk along the river bank, a messenger hands him a sealed paper wherein he reads that: "The Master who has the ivory needle-case, and who sends so many verses to a certain lady, is to take boat on the night before the festival of the Finding of the True Cross. The boatman of the Rheinsfelden ferry will ask to see the ivory case. The Master is warned that he may endanger life and limb if he follows these instructions." What does life mean to Hadlaub who has been so foolish as to take the game of the Minnesong in desperate earnest, and who sees the beloved of his heart slipping into the toils of a reckless worldling, to become perchance his light o' love? And so, despite the warning, Hadlaub is at the trysting place on that May night, is questioned by the ferryman concerning the ivory needlecase, and is whisked away on the broad river, (one sheen of hurrying gold it seems,) is brought to Schwarz Wasserstelz, where a small door in the castle wall is opened stealthily, and finds himself in pitchy darkness. A guiding hand takes his, then leaves him, and he hears a door close gently behind him, while a key grinds three times in the lock. He is a prisoner, but what can Fides want of him? He

little knows that just above his prison, in a lighted hall, the Bishop Chancellor and a splendid company sup with my Lady Fides, and that Count Wernher is looking at her with the bright eyes of desire, which the Bishop Chancellor complacently believes to be the gaze of an honest suitor for a dowerless maiden's hand! Dowerless indeed! With good broad lands, a castle and several sacks of gold belonging to her! But such trifles are beneath the notice of a noble knight like Count Wernher, who seeks to wed great wealth, whatever delicious passion may stir him in love's fancy! If the Prince-Abbess had seen those eyes, she would have known right well, but she is not there just then to guard her daughter, who, however, is planning to guard herself after her own fashion. At last the guests depart; Hadlaub hears voices and laughter and the splash of oars in the river and, at the same moment, a key creaks in his prison door, a ray of light shoots through the cellar-room and Mistress Fides stands on the threshold, a silver lamp held above her head. She smiles at him—"Danger death, what matter you to me?") and asks him how he does, waits for no answer, whispers there is peril for him in Zürich, commands him to keep quiet until she orders otherwise, tells him he shall have a good bed and food, and says once more there is danger for him in Zürich. He cries out that he cares for nothing save to be near her, but she has vanished thro' the heavy door, leaving a serving maid in her stead. Obediently, he follows the maid up a steep winding stairway and in a little turret-room finds food and bed prepared; means to sit up writing lyrics to his beloved gaoler and, being young, falls into a dreamless sleep.

The sun is high in the heavens when he wakes; the maid brings him food and locks the door when she goes out. The day drags on—more food is brought him. Caged birds sing, why can he pen no verse in this dear prison of his beloved's castle? At last the door is opened and Fides comes in leading a little fair-haired child by the hand—some peasant's child she has carried off from a hamlet near-by to play the duenna for her. She means to have her commune with her poet, in spite of all the rules which forbid such interviews to high-born damsels!

Is Fides weary from mounting the steep steps to the turret room? It seems so, for her breath comes quickly thro' her parted lips—"oh! roter roter Munt," as Hadlaub, calmly plagiarising Herr Walter, sings so often).

She sits her down, does Mistress Fides, upon an oaken settle near the window and lifts the bairn upon her knees, then, still a little breathlessly, she asks her prisoner what he has meant by all his songs to her?

He answers stoutly that the game of words and rhythms had been no plaything to him, and that his blither songs were truly but a conceit, for, he adds bitterly, who should know better than Fides that he has had no cause to be light of heart? Womanlike she does not answer this, but upbraids him for his "Harvest Songs." The man who has given the homage of his soul to a woman could surely have refrained from writing coarse rhymes about lewd peasant wenches and gross feedings on pigs' meat? Did he not know that such things are insults to her? Hadlaub defends himself as best he can: yes, he had turned to rough ways, but he pleads that t'was her coldness to him which had driven him to such things! The old excuse which never fails to mollify a woman! And Mistress Fides smiles upon him with kindlier eyes. Then, so intermingled with his love of her is his love of poesy, altho' he is all unskilled in wooing, he unwittingly takes the surest way of disarming this maiden brought up on music and poetry. He tells her how in Austria among the nameless minstrels' nameless rhymes he has found a roll of soiled parchment, whereon are noted some of the sweetest songs he has ever heard. And that of these, a woman's song is the fairest of all. Has she heard of the singer Kürenberg? Ah! Yes! Fides' interest is ablaze at once! Has Hadlaub found some songs of his? Then he sings her those two verses which have charmed the world ever since:

"Ich zôch mir einen Valken mêre danne ein jâr
Dô ich in gazamete, als ich in wolte hân,
Und ich im sîn gevidere mit golde wol bewant,
Et huop sich ûf vil hôhe und fluog in anderin Lant.

Sît sach ich den valken schöne vliegen;
Er fuorte an sînem fuoze sîdine riemen,
Und was im sin gevidere alrôt guldin. —
Got sende si zesamene, die geliebe gerne wellen sin!”

Gottfried Keller translates it into modern German, but the old words are best.

While Hadlaub sings, Fides draws the child to her and, to hide the tears which are dimming her eyes, kisses the little one on cheek and brow and lips. Hadlaub's voice, always clear and soft, vibrates with emotion, for never before has he sung to Fides alone. When he has finished singing, there follows a moment's pause and Hadlaub watches his beloved eagerly. Will she hear the appeal of his lonely heart echoing in the pathetic words of Kûrenberg's forsaken lady? But before Fides has time to speak, there comes a rap at the door and a serving-maid peeps in saying that Count Wernher of Homberg and his retainers are approaching in a boat. With an exclamation, (was it of annoyance or of pleasure? Hadlaub asks himself despondently) with an exclamation Mistress Fides hurries away to meet her inopportune guests, leaving the child with Hadlaub.

There is a hint of broad farce in the next scene, which is an admirable contrast to the ballad-like tone of the rest of the story. The boat nears the Schwarz Wasserstolz landing-stage and Fides, leaning out of one of the windows, calls to Count Wernher to tell his business, as she is alone in the castle and good custom does not permit a maiden to entertain a stranger. Count Wernher nevertheless makes as though he would land, but Fides quickly signs to the ferryman who pushes the boat off into the deeper water. At the same moment, another boat shoots round the corner of the castle-wall and collides with Count Wernher's bark. Both boats nearly capsize and the knight, who is standing at the prow, loses his balance and falls into the water; while a gaunt old dame, who is standing up in the second boat, topples over, plunges in beside him and seizes him round the neck. The ill-matched couple splash and splutter and Fides, up at her, window laughs in uncontrollable

mirth. The unlovely personage, who is clawing the half suffocated knight, is no other than her Aunt Mechtildis, the châtelaine of Weiss Wasserstelz, who with her usual inquisitive ardour, has hastened to investigate the scandal of a boatful of gentlemen going to visit Fides, whom she surmises to be alone in the castle. A pretty water-sprite indeed for a superb knight to clasp! But old Mechtildis holds fast, squealing like a pig at the slaughter, and Count Wernher, shouting curses, raises almost as great a pothor! Finally, the pair is rescued; Mechtildis is led, dripping and furious, into Fides' castle, while my Lord Wernher is ferried across to the other bank, where, also dripping and still more furious, he mounts his horse and rides away, calling out that Schwarz Wasserstelz and all its inmates can go to the devil and stay there.

Fides dries her shrewish aunt, exclaiming the while upon the perfidy of a knight who would have forced his attentions upon a poor damsel all alone in her castle. (All alone? oh! Fides, and what about a certain poet in a turret-room?) The inquisitive, but entirely hoodwinked aunt goes back to her tower across the river, and Mistress Fides speeds up the winding stairs to the turret-room.

Hadlaub is sitting with the peasant child upon his knees, softly kissing the cheeks and brow and the fragrant little mouth just where Fides lips had kissed a short while since. When Fides would have taken the child from him, he hangs back and pretends he will not give her up. The little one lifts up her face to Fides for a kiss—and somehow the two grown people fall victim to the play—and the kisses stray to each other's lips—while the child, now set aside, stands watching with puzzled, serious eyes, until in sudden loneliness she raises a whimpering cry which reminds Fides of her presence. She comforts the little one, then turning once more to Hadlaub, she lays her hand on his heart and says very gravely: "Here will I live in great and good security, here is my fortress and my home until I die."

A few days later, Mistress Fides summons a grand company to a banquet at Schwarz Wasserstelz. The Bishop Chancellor, the Prince-Abbess, Sir Rüdiger Manesse and his shrewd

dame and many knights and ladies are assembled. A couple, standing at the far end of the banqueting hall, creates some comment: this is a burly old peasant and his portly wife dressed in their best.

The door is thrown open and Fides appears leading Master Johannes Hadlaub by the hand and, in a steady voice, she tells her guests that she has found her mate.

A murmur greets her words, a murmur half astonishment, half disapproval, and the Bishop Chancellor rises from his chair with a gesture of angry denial, but his hand sinks to his side again—for what has he to bid or forbid since his love-child does not bear his name? And yet he starts to speak: "Impossible—unthinkable," but he falls silent, for the Prince-Abbess, who has seen her child's glad face and glowing eyes, whispers to him to hold his peace. Then Sir Rüdiger comes forward and makes what his Lady Wife afterwards affirmed to be the most (she sometimes said the only) sensible speech of his life. Something like this it ran: "Our game has turned out earnest, the Minnesongs have been perhaps a little over-real. My faithful loving friend, Lord Bishop Heinrich, the times are changed, I think we old people can but bow our heads, and yet perhaps never has a love-song had a fairer ending."

Then up speaks the bluff old peasant, Hadlaub's father: "I never liked the silly minstrelsy, but this high-born maiden is an honest woman, and so I've bought my son a good clean house in Zürich for his dower—as he loves the town better than our country life, because of his fine scholar ways, I doubt not."

And the Bishop Chancellor having seen the love-light in his daughter's eyes (since the Prince-Abbess has told him it is there) gives Fides and her Minnesinger his best wishes for their happiness, perchance he fain would have given them a father's blessing if custom had allowed him to be frank.

Fides and Hadlaub live happily in the good town of Zürich and after many years, Master Hadlaub finishes the great Codex and writes proudly at the end: "Die gesungen hant nu zemale C und XXXVIII."

"The songs here sung are now ten times a hundred and thirty eight."

And a fair and noble thing it is indeed, this work of a man's long and happy life.

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Some time after the telling of the story of Hadlaub, the godfather pays a visit to Herr Jacques and finds him daubing gold paint upon a large sheet of paper whereon he has drawn a medley of armorial bearings, banners, weapons, musical instruments, a globe and strangely proportioned lions. In the midst of this heterogenous assembly is an inscription announcing that it is the book of the "Zürich Treasury" and Jacques informs his godfather that it is to be the sequel to the Manesse Codex and is to be kept in Zürich, the "Athens of Switzerland." The old man starts lecturing the boy on the absurdity of such expressions, but breaks off and proposes to go up to the Castle of Manegg and spend the sunset hour there once more. Thus again we have the setting of the ruined castle for the telling of the story of "Der Narr auf Manegg" (the Fool of Manegg) which is the continuation of Keller's historical tales in the Züricher Novellen. The godfather gives Herr Jacques a rapid sketch of the descendants of Herr Rüdiger Manesse. Then he recounts shortly the story of "Knight Ital who was never at home." Here again we have the figure which haunted Keller of the man who misses his life's happiness by his dilatory manner of wooing. We have it in different forms in Keller's works: in *Der Grüne Heinrich* and *Dortchen Schöpfung*, *Pankraz* and *Lydia*, and in *Zendelwald* and the *Lady Bertrade* where the catastrophe of lost opportunity would also have occurred had the Blessed Virgin not interfered. With Sir Ital the fiasco is complete. The lady of Ital's heart is an heiress who would have replenished his coffers and thus saved the Castle of Manegg, Manesse Codex and all. She is willing enough and shows it, but Sir Ital fails to speak and when, at length, she actually gives him tryst at his castle, he goes hunting to provide game for her supper, thinking she will be as dilatory as he and will not appear until later. She, ardent and impatient, arrives at the castle betimes, fails

to gain admittance, and, thinking herself spurned, goes off in a huff and leaves Zürich for ever. Having lost the heiress by his own foolishness, Sir Ital espouses a gaunt noblewoman without a farthing to her aristocratic name. Things go from bad to worse and finally he is obliged to sell the castle to a neighbouring nunnery, whose abbess causes the lands to be tilled, but leaves the delapidated castle unoccupied. Sir Ital takes up his abode in the town and lives a penurious life, his only remaining treasure being the Manesse Codex.

Now, the laughing-stock of the countryside was one Buz Falätscher, a half crazed being who was supposed to be the descendant of a bastard daughter of that Priest Johannes Manesse, who had taken Hadlaub to Sir Rüdiger's house on the day when the plan of the Codex was first mooted.

This bastard's mother had been no noble lady, but what the mediæval chronicler tersely calls "a night woman." It seemed that the patrician blood warred with the poor night woman's heritage in Buz Falätscher's complexity, which priests call the soul, for on the one side the creature had the ambition to become a knight, on the other he was simply a wastrel, a lazy, good-for-nothing fellow. He lived in a mud hut under the Falätsche rock, trapped unwary rabbits or caught river-trout for food, and sometimes a good-natured burgher would throw him a silver piece. He had had a little schooling, he could read and some said he could write when he liked, but his only noticeable accomplishment was an unlimited flow of words. He loitered about the countryside and for years his obsession was that he was a priest and would one day become a prelate, elected thereto because of his Manesse blood. Then he came across a band of mercenaries and immediately saw himself as a warrior. The mercenaries took him along as a kind of Merry Andrew, dressed him in a frayed tunic, gave him a helmet and a plume and let him prate and swagger for their amusement. Then one day, in Lombardy, he really came into battle, at least there was to have been an encounter between the Swiss and the troops of the Lord of Visconti, but the commanders, intending to treat, called truce. At that moment Buz Falätscher's knightly blood asserted

itself and caused him to be seized with such martial fervour that he challenged one of the Italian leaders to single combat between the lines, which were only a stone's throw from one another. The Italian, who happened to be of giant stature, came into the field with grim menace and Buz strode forward to meet him with much show of valour, but, when standing eye to eye, he saw his foe's fierce mien, alas! the warrior blood capitulated to the baser strain—and Buz turned tail and fled amid the roars of laughter of both camps. Animosity was vanquished by amusement, the Italiens sent the Swiss a cask of wine, the Swiss in return presented the Italians with a fat sucking pig. And the treaty of peace was concluded. But in Buz Falätscher's complexity there was no peace, for the undisguised hilarity had taught him that the mercenaries only humoured him, that he was their buffoon—nothing more! And so he left them and set off on the road to the Falätsche rock. On the way, he fell in with a tramp-woman who, seeing his distress, asked him what was amiss. Then the poor crank, just cured of one of his crazes, complained that he was a man for whom no one had a kindly word, a truthful man whom none believed. Whether the woman was touched at his sadness, or whether she had nowhere to call home is not said, anyhow she offered to go with Buz, promising to believe in him always. He led her to the mud hut under the Falätsche rock and, waving his hand in a grand gesture, he asked if she did not think it a fine dwelling? She answered truly "yes," for indeed, a mud hut is better than no roof! Humbly the poor slut set herself to redd up the place, cleaned and repaired it somehow, cooked the stolen rabbits and trout, any old morsel which her lord brought home, got kicks and bruised eyes for wages, served as night-woman and day-drudge. Buz grew more and more grandiloquent under bettered fortune, the hallucinations thrived in his weak mind: he was a man with a house and wife, had been in the Church though he had taken no vows, had been a celebrated warrior and so on! When his crazy brain turned angry, there was always his drudge-woman to ill-treat. He went too far in this one night, nearly strangled the miserable life out of her, and the next morning she had

vanished, had taken to the road again or what not, anyhow was gone from him and the neighbourhood for ever. He grew more daft than ever after this and, finding that the Castle of Manegg was untenanted, broke in and established himself in the deserted hall where, long ago, Hadlaub had shown the Codex to the lord and ladies, prelates and knights. The nuns, to whom the castle now belonged, left him undisturbed; the peasants had nothing to say in the matter, and when Buz, having pulled down a rusty sword from the old walls, found a battered helmet, fastened to it a large plume (some old rooster's tail most likely) and strutted into the town of Zürich declaring himself to be the Knight of Manegg, the citizens laughed and led him on in his folly. He became a recognized feature of drunken revelry in base taverns, where his high-flown stories were received with hilarity; the jester of the town in fact was what he was, and in return for his wild tales he got drink and food and a warm angle-nook of a cold night, where he sat, a phantastic ludicrous figure, a caricature of knighthood. Even the patricians knew him, considered his parody of their caste diverting and sometimes he was called in to the richer taverns to amuse the company. Thus one night he chanced to be there when Sir Ital "who was never at home" brought his one remaining treasure, the Manesse Codex, to show to his companions. Buz Falätscher was waved aside, his quips and cranks forgotten, himself unnoticed, while Sir Ital showed the book and spoke of Minnesingers, of grand old days, of his forebear Sir Rüdiger and the rest.

As the night wore on deep potations overcame the gentlemen's few wits and when at length they ambled off to bed, Sir Ital forgot his last treasure, leaving the Codex, forlorn and unhonoured, on the tavern table; equally forgot Buz the mock Knight of Manegg.

The next morning, when daylight brought reason and memory back to Sir Ital, he hastened to the tavern, but the Codex had disappeared. Impossible to suspect the noble gentlemen, his companions, besides they all denied knowledge of the book. Sir Ital had unfortunately paid too high homage to the god of wine (they could not recall his name, and in

any case it would be a pagan deity and they were all good churchmen, if bad scholars.) Anyway, Sir Ital's wits having been an atom fuddled, Sir Ital having been in his cups in fact, it was likely he had dropped the book on his way home—thieves were always about at night in the unlit streets—and—well! it was only an old book after all. Sir Ital thought so too, and the matter ended.

Buz Falätscher was unsuspected, to be accurate he was forgotten in all this, but it was in his dirty claw-like hands that the great Codex had been carried back to the Castle of Manegg. Attracted by the glitter of the gold-leaf, the carmines, blues and scarlets of the Minnesingers' portraits and the fine colours of the initial letters, the crazy creature pored over the book, using his small knowledge of reading to decipher the old poems. Like a horrible human spider he sprawled on the dirty straw where he slept, and read and read. Perhaps his Manesse blood stirred some atavistic love of beauty and scholarship in him? Anyway, Buz, who always postured even to his own soul as something he was not—and could never be—made up his unhinged mind to be a Minnesinger in his turn. He strung together words and meaningless phrases—jumbled them to a sort of rhythm, chanted them, muttered them—laughed his mad laughter in sheer joy at them. Believed himself the counterpart of Walther—Walther—what's the name? Buz consulted the book, spelled out Vogelweide—forgot it again—what matter? He, Buz, was a Minnesinger, a maker of songs as good and better—and all the world would know of him, the cruel fool world which had disbelieved in him.

He took to meandering about the city, waylaying the passers-by, pestering them till they consented to listen to his poems (God save the mark!) and if they pushed him aside, he ran after them, threatening them with a long knife he carried hidden in his ragged jerkin, glaring at them with such mad wild eyes that they paused and listened and, half terrorized, applauded the sorry string of words he hurled at them. Minnesinger! Minnesinger! the last of the Manesse, the Knight of Manegg, butt and fool and madman! He was

growing dangerous—so they said in Zürich and men avoided, women fled from him. Then, at last, Sir Ital heard of it all and a light flashed thro' his brain: Buz Falätscher had stolen the Codex and that was why his mazed soul was posturing as a Minnesinger. Sir Ital told his friends one evening at their wine and instantly the younger men, eager for a prank, declared they would rout out the thief and rescue the book. One of them, the Knight of Sax, who had a leaning towards scholarship and a certain hesitating love of books, egged them on and so they summoned their servants, ordered torches and, half drunken, very gay and noisy, they set off up the hill to Castle Manegg.

It was midnight when they got there, the torch-flames shuddered in the wind and, like demons, the young men bounded hither and thither in the fitful glare. Buz, aroused from sleep in his bed of straw and filth, started up in wild alarm, kindled a rushlight and ran from room to room—. The besiegers saw the light, a pinpoint of flame, appearing here and there like some frantic will-o'-the-wisp. In the banqueting hall, past the first floor windows, beyond in the old Kemenate, up in the turret-rooms the light appeared. A man-hunt is a very fascinating thing, even for Christian gentlemen, as warfare, religious persecution and spy-hunting have proved over and over again, and Sir Ital and his comrades were bitten with the lust of it. The more their frenzied quarry flitted about, the greater grew their ardour as they shouted and howled at him. Then one of them, who had borrowed a bear's skin as disguise, because the whole thing was really only a game, began battering on the old door, right under the narrow window whence Buz, the Knight of Manegg, was peering furtively at his tormentors. Poor madman, he made sure that hell itself was after him—hell and wild beasts. With piercing yells, he fled up to the tower. They saw the pinpoint of light flit up. Some reveller was struck with a new thought: smoke the thief out, fine sport indeed! A window broken (stained glass, if you please, because t'was in the banqueting hall) a torch flung in—and the bed of straw set alight. No little cloud of smoke to justify the merry game, but in an

instant a sheet of flame shot up, which licked at the old settles, the piles of broken wooden things—rushed on—and on. Castle Manegg was afire!

Then the Knight of Sax, sobered by the horror of it and remembering the Codex, swung himself up thro' a window and faced the flames. Shriek on shriek came from the tower where the madman cowered, otherwise the noise had fallen and only the roar of the flames, the crackling of dry wood burning filled the night, for the besiegers had realised that their play had gone very far and that a man—even tho' it was only Buz, the ridiculous, insane, sham knight, that a living man was there in the flames and that the Knight of Sax had vaulted in to save him.

At last, it had taken only a short time, yet to the watchers it had seemed an hour, the Knight of Sax reappeared bearing something limp, like an old cloak, a miserable tatter of a thing in his arms—a poor hideous carrion which still clasped a great book in its blackened claw-like hands. They laid it on the grass, the lurid light from the burning castle played over it, while the flames roared and hissed a sort of requiem over Buz Falätscher, who at last had ceased posturing as what he was not, never could have been: sham priest, mock warrior, spurious knight, make believe Minnesinger; and now only a broken bit of miserable humanity, a poor creature who had perished half from the smoke and a good deal more from the terror beating on his racked brain.

But the Codex was unharmed, when the Knight of Sax opened it the untarnished gold-leaf shone in the flames' glare and the figures of the Minnesingers stood out in all the artistry of Hadlaub's careful work.

Sir Ital "who was never at home" had at least one good thought: he gave the Codex to the Knight of Sax who, after all, had a fair right to it, having rescued it from the fire, and he took it to his castle of Forsteck where it was treasured for generations. Yet when, in sixteen hundred odd, the Zürichers bought the Castle of Forsteck from the Hohensaxes, who had fallen on evil days, the Codex had once more disappeared.

Then the peasants started a story: the rock of Forsteck was haunted, they said that on summer nights there was a sound of lutes and fiddles and men's voices singing lilting melodies. It was the pixies and the fairies of the hill the peasants thought; but we know better, or like to think we do, it was surely the spirits of the great book, the Minnesingers themselves, who came together and sang their songs once more in gratitude to the Lady of Hohensax who had sold the book to a man who loved it: Palsgrave Friedrich of Heidelberg.

CHAPTER VII.

The Landvogt of Greifensee.

THE sun had set when the godfather finished the story of the "Fool of Manegg," and tapping Herr Jacques upon the shoulder, the old man proposed to wend their way homewards. Herr Jacques was silent and thoughtful, the tragi-comedy of the man who "postured as what he was not, never could have been" rankled in the boy's mind. When he reached home, he went moodily to the attic, which he had delighted in calling his studio, and removed from his drawing board the paper with the ill-proportioned lions. With all our love for Gottfried Keller we need not gloss over the fact that Herr Jacques and his godfather bore us a little. Keller's pedagogic intention is too evident, altho' we cannot withhold our gratitude to the godfather for telling the two stories among the ruins of Castle Manegg. It is curious that the idea of a story told on a hill overlooking a city always fascinates us, perhaps it is some unacknowledged memory of Boccaccio's lords and ladies "up at Fiesole"? Has the literary sense its atavism? Be this as it may, we cannot fail to appreciate the charm of the setting Meister Gottfried chose to give the *Züricher Novellen*, even if we are conscious of a faint irritation when our attention is wrenched back to Herr Jacques. Possibly Meister Gottfried was aware of this, for in the *Züricher Novellen* he finishes off Herr Jacques, as a reformed character of course, after the "Landvogt von Greifensee," which the godfather, who had written it, gave Jacques to copy. It is strange that Keller abandoned his chronological plan in the volume, placing the seventeenth century "Ursula" after the eighteenth century "Landvogt" and the nineteenth century "Banner of the Seven Upright

Ones." Perhaps he thought that to persist in the chronological order would have been monotonous; but when we regroup the novellen in our minds, as every thoughtful reader does instinctively, one of Keller's greatest qualities is enhanced, for we perceive how strikingly he gave the colour of each century: the formal brilliancy of gold-leaf and carmine of the fourteenth century in Hadlaub, like the pages of an illuminated Missal; the blurred colour of the decay of chivalry and culture in the fifteenth century "Fool of Manegg," a sort of satyr-play as sequel to Hadlaub; and the dark disorder of the turbulent seventeenth century "Ursula;" followed by the delicate tones of the pre-revolution eighteenth century in the "Landvogt" and then the straightforward reds and blues of the mid-nineteenth century in the "Banner of the Seven Upright Ones."

The figure of the Landvogt von Greifensee is taken from a well known Swiss historical personage, Solomon Landolt, whose biography was current literature in Keller's day. Since Keller made the Landvogt live in his pages he is a familiar figure to every educated Swiss. He stands as the type of the bachelor, not the cranky misogynist, but the hale old country-gentlemen who has somehow failed to find a wife, yet has settled down and lives an orderly life, with house and quiet homestead.

The Greifensee novelle contains five studies of women given in the Landvogt's five love-stories, and a sixth portrait in the person of Solomon Landolt's housekeeper, Frau Marianne, one of Keller's best character-studies.

For English readers the title "Landvogt" needs explanation, as we have never had anything similar in England. A Landvogt in Switzerland was a Government official whose duties comprised those of a Lord Lieutenant and a Justice of the Peace. He was the Governor of a district, a non-political, permanent official with a good salary and an official residence called a Landvogtei.

Landvogt Solomon decided to invite the five ladies he had wooed long ago, to spend the day at the Landvogtei, but first he had to make sure of their reception by Frau

Marianne, his tyrant housekeeper. "She was the queerest customer on earth," Keller says and then he gives us a sketch of her life's history. She was a Tyrolese peasant girl whose stepmother, to get rid of her, forced her into a convent, as she had a beautiful voice and the gift of music. But Marianne had escaped before her novitiate was over and had taken service in a Freiburg tavern as cook. Being a handsome strapping wench she was pursued by the officers and students who frequented the tavern, but she sent them all packing, save a student, a youth of good family, to whom she lost her heart. One of the officers dared to speak lightly of her, whereupon she appeared among the guests and marching up to the traducer, proceeded to attack him with her long kitchen-knife. Her onslaught was so forceful that the officer was obliged to draw his sword in self-defence. She disarmed him, broke his sword and threw it at his feet. He was rescued by his comrades, but, considered dishonoured as having been vanquished by a woman, he was dismissed from the army. The duel however so impressed the young student that he married Marianne, joined a hussar regiment and she became the regimental vivandière. She bore him nine children, each of whom she loved with all the violence of her stormy nature, but they all died in infancy. Then her pampered hussar husband, now that her beauty was spoiled by child-bearing and sorrow, recollected that he came of aristocratic stock and reproached her for ruining his prospects. She said no word, but took her savings, bought him out of his military contract and let him go where his sweet will led him, while she tramped back to the Tyrol. Here she was told work was to be had over the Swiss border, so she tramped on, heard that the Landvogt of Greifensee needed a housekeeper, applied for the situation, was engaged and ever since had been the tyrant of the Landvogtei. She swore like a trooper, kept rigid order in house and farm-yard, ruled like an old soldier, was respected and feared. She saved the Landvogt's money as if it had been her own, loved Herr Solomon devoutly, mothered him and scolded him. Then of an evening, after she had given him the account of the day's work, standing stiff and

straight at attention like a sergeant major, she would toss off a bumper of burgundy to his good health and, if he begged for it, this "queer old customer" would sing for him, all her roughness and harshness banished, while from these grim lips poured forth a wealth of melody: old songs and ballads or a latin hymn learned in her convent days—and sometimes a lilting lullaby, poor soul. Out into the night floated that grand contralto voice, the voice of a true woman's heart wherein lurked no memory of the curses and coarse sayings her lips had learned in taverns, camps and barrack canteens.

It was no easy matter for Herr Landolt to make Frau Marianne understand why he had invited the five ladies. At first she swore freely at not having known he had been such a devil of a fellow, assumed he had deceived all five and left them in the lurch; then when he confessed, a little ruefully, that the boot had been on the other foot and that they had given him the go-by, she cursed them for a pack of hussies and congratulated the Landvogt on his happy thought, believing he meant to revenge himself by locking them up in the old tower hard-by and letting them starve awhile! But when he explained that he meant to receive them very honourably, so that he might dream himself back in his lost youth, she suddenly caught his hand, kissed it hurriedly, dashed away a tear from her eyes and said she understood: it was just as if she had been going to have one glad day with her children—all nine of them, the blessed angels!

The Landvogt having won her over, proceeded to enlighten her concerning his guests, and thus Gottfried Keller brings in the five short stories: "The Finch," "The Clown," "The Captain," "The White Throat," and "The Blackbird," these being the nicknames which the Landvogt gave to the ladies he loved.

The first was called thus because a finch was her family crest. It is a gentle little story of a boy's first love. Solomon wooed her and the people smiled because she had been christened Salome and the names Solomon and Salome seemed to go well together. The boy, uncertain whether her

favouring of him was not part of the bantering talk of Solomon and Salome, wrote her an unwise letter. To test her he told her his family history: spendthrift father; rowdy eccentric mother; roistering, gambling, dissolute uncles; squandered property! He drummed up one or two unpretentious escapades of his own, made them out fairly serious, finished by declaring he doubted whether he was fitted to found a family! Directly he had despatched this letter he began to feel how dangerous an experiment it was and tormented himself with dark forebodings, which were forthwith fulfilled, for Salome carried his confession to her parents, who, though praising Solomon for his honesty, forbade the marriage. Salome wept for a day and a night and shortly afterwards married a rich suitor; Solomon mourned for half a day, then consoled himself with the reflection that he was a free man with the world before him.

Landolt's next episode is more serious, it is the famous "Hanswurstel" story whose heroine, *Figura Leu*, is a blend of Keller's two beloveds: *Johanna Kapp* in Heidelberg and *Luise Scheidegger* in Zürich, both of whose lives had been wrecked by insanity. It is a brilliant little study in other ways, for it gives us an interesting picture of an historical personage: the Zürich author *Johann Jakob Bodmer*, who wrote sickly sentimental epics and fifty worthless dramas. Other merits were his however: he translated Milton's *Paradise Lost* and fought for the great Englishman's fame against the scornful apprisement by that narrow-minded dictator of German literary taste in the early eighteenth century, the Leipzig Professor *Johann Christian Gottsched*, who upheld the French literary tradition and condemned Milton. Bodmer and his friend *Breitinger's* attack upon the pedant of Leipzig is one of the celebrated controversies of German literature.

Gottfried Keller is unkind to Bodmer for he depicts him as a conceited poseur, but a niche in the temple of literature is his for all that, for besides the prose translation of *Paradise Lost* he published the first collection of the *Minnesinger's* songs taken from our friend Master Hadlaub's *Manesse Codex*;

and it was he too who first reproduced the *Nibelungenlied*. Who could be ungrateful to the man who rescued for us the wonder-song which begins with that delicious line:

“Uns ist in alten Maeren wonders viel geseit.”

Keller shows us Bodmer, the Cicero of Zürich as he was called, paying the poet Solomon Gessner a visit in his garden outside Zürich, and we breathe the air of that cultured cosmopolitan Switzerland of the eighteenth century which must have been so delightful. We hear of letters just received from Paris: Jean Jacques writing the warmest eulogy of Gessner's poems; messages from Diderot too, who offered to publish some of Gessner's idyls in a volume of his own works! Then we hear talk of German poets: of Klopstock who had stayed with Bodmer long ago in Zürich and distressed the studious man by his joyous acceptance of life. Bodmer, who had always sought and found his rapture in books and ancient manuscripts, had failed to understand that the genius who, at sixteen, had written those splendid first cantos of the “Messias,” was still very young and hungry for life and laughter. And so the friendship had waned, leaving only a bitter memory in Bodmer's studious soul. Then had come Wieland and once more Bodmer had dreamed he had found the ideal intellectual commune; but Wieland, athirst for the beauty of many inspirations, he who drank deep and to his incalculable gain of such dissimilar elixirs as St. Augustin and Plato, as Voltaire and Young, as Milton and Jean Jacques, the eclectic souled Wieland could not long be held in thrall by Bodmer the specialist; and so the tragedy of disappointment had come about again. All this was long passed when we meet Bodmer in Gessner's garden, but it is conjured up for us and we “discern the infinite passion and the pain of finite hearts that yearn.”

While Bodmer is talking in the garden Figura Leu's irrepressible spirit of mockery and mischief induces her to fasten a little pocket-mirror to the ribbon of Landolt's tie wig, while he paces up and down absorbed in his thoughts and all unaware of the trick she has practised on him. She follows him, dancing a sort of pantomime, a second looking-glass in her hand wherein

she alternately mirrors her gestures and catches their reflection from the smaller mirror hanging on Landolt's shoulders.

Bodmer notices her antics and, pausing in his discourse, he points a long, thin forefinger at her and asks her mildly why she is ridiculing an old man? For he realises that her mimicry is meant to caricature his self-mirroring vanity.

It is a scene which might have been painted by Watteau: the formal eighteenth century garden, the contrast of the old man and the laughing girl, the mockery of gaunt old-age by youth and beauty. Through it all, Keller weaves the thread of *Figura Leu's* psychology: her lack of measure and the touch of buffoonery in all she does, which causes Landolt to name her *Hanswurstel*, the clown.

Landolt is hurt and offended, for he believes she has tried to make him a laughing-stock, so he turns away and wanders thro' the garden. She follows him, and now Keller gives us a most poignant scene: *Figura* explains herself to Landolt, asking him how he can be so blind as not to see that she loves him. Then she tells him the pitiful secret of her life: her mother was mad—her grandmother too—for generations the women of her family have been insane, some have gone under in raving madness, others have fought thro' miserably, all have lived under this great dread. The men of the family have been immune, it is a curse upon the women it seems; and therefore her mother, in a lucid interval, has made *Figura* promise never to marry and to let the curse die with her. She owns that she plays foolish tricks, laughs too wildly—it is all done to shut out the menace from her own consciousness, to forget the dread which pursues her.

Solomon and *Figura* return to the other guests and there is dancing on the smooth grass, while the setting sun casts a glow over the clipped hedges, the statues and fountains of the formal garden. No one is as gay as *Figura Leu*, it is her laughter which leads the merriment, her voice which sings the clearest and only Solomon Landolt knows the pain and fear which lurk beneath the poor girl's gaiety.

Thus ends the Landvogt's second love-story. For seven years he is true to *Figura*, while she lives on seemingly a

happy Hanswurstel; the menace of madness is unfulfilled, but she is faithful to her promise and never marries, altho' when Solomon Landolt chances to meet her, her eyes tell him that she loves him still and will love him to her life's end.

For seven years Solomon Landolt's thoughts clung to Figura Leu, then once more love came to him. A retired Dutch captain lived in Zürich, a wine-bibbing, selfish old fellow, whose only pride was his skill in fencing. He invited his acquaintances to his house to fence with him, and there one day Landolt saw his beautiful, overdressed daughter, Wendelgard. Gossip had it that the captain, spending all he had on himself and refusing to pay for his daughter's extravagances, the bailiff had already been to the house, and it was whispered Mistress Wendelgard would soon be lodged in the debtor's prison. Love—love at first sight too—taught Landolt pity, he sought an interview with Wendelgard and pretended he was sent by the law-courts to investigate her debts in order to arrange matters without scandal. The frightened girl, reassured by the kindness of his manner, showed him all her bills, which he found amounted to far less than was rumoured. He promised to help her, for by this time he was really in love with her and he meant to pay her debts, anonymously of course, and then to marry her; his wishes translating her evident gratitude and relief into dawning affection.

Although the sum total of the debts was not large, it was more than Landolt could disburse; he therefore sought the aid of his grandmother, a rich and eccentric lady whose chief whimsy was the prevention of the marriage of her relations, as, although she considered men to be wretched creatures, she believed women to be worse! Keller sketches this redoubtable dame carefully and gives us a picture of her old-world dwelling and the quaint knicknacks which she had round her. Landolt informed his grandmother that, having lost money at cards, he must marry a rich wife to pay his debts. The old lady instantly rose in her wrath denouncing marriage and womankind. One of the knicknacks, which had fascinated

Landolt since his earliest remembrance, was a small carved ivory skeleton holding a silver scythe. It represented death and frequently served the grandmother as an adjunct to her sermonisings on humanity. She now took up this gruesome curio and, shaking it in her grandson's face, asked him if he did not know that men and women would sooner or later look like that—bones and a grinning skull? Who would dare to love, marry and beget children when this was the fate of all upon earth? Landolt shuddered a little at the thought of Wendelgard's young body reduced to this grim thing; but the image of death made him reflect that, in our brief tenure of life, love and happiness must be enjoyed without delay! So he sighed and vowed he must save his honour and marry for the sake of a paltry thousand gulden or so; whereupon the grandmother, true to her mania, gave him the money and told him he was a free man.

It was very discreetly done, the captain was informed that an unknown benefactor intended to pay Wendelgard's debts, but wished her to believe the help came from her own father. The old rascal promptly consented. Landolt was wily enough not to entrust him with the money, but settled the bills himself and arrived at the captain's house with the receipted accounts which he gave to Mistress Wendelgard, pretending her father had paid in the money to the law-courts. Then he told her he loved her and wished to protect her for ever, and Wendelgard, after some hesitation, promised to give him her answer in a week's time.

All this had opened the captain's eyes to his daughter's pecuniary value and he ordered her to pack her finest clothes, which foolish Landolt had paid for, by hoodwinking his grandmother too, and to accompany him to the Swiss watering place Baden, where many distinguished people were assembled, and where he thought he was likely to pick up a wealthy suitor for Wendelgard. No sooner however had the old fellow arrived at Baden, then he fell in with some of his cronies, and, leaving his daughter to her own devices, he ambled off to his accustomed occupation of swilling and hawering in the tavern.

Now Figura Leu chanced to be lodging in the same house

as the captain and Wendelgard, and seeing that the girl was lonely and neglected, the dear Hanswurstel, always impulsive and kindly, took pity on her and invited her to meals and walks. Wendelgard confessed her love affair and told Figura there were but four days left of the appointed seven when she was to give Landolt an answer! Figura's mentality is subtly portrayed: her tenderness, her shrewdness, her exaggeration, her subconscious jealousy of Landolt, her honest, loving anxiety for his happiness. She decided to put Wendelgard to the test. Martin Leu, Figura's brother, an officer in the Swiss Guards of His Majesty of France, was to pass through Baden that very evening on his way to Zürich. Figura waylaid him on the road, explained her plan to him and he consented to play into her hands. High time too if Landolt was to be rescued, for it was the fourth day and on the seventh Wendelgard would have to give her answer—and Figura knew it would be "Yes". So the next morning Martin Leu appeared in Baden as a wealthy Frenchman; met the captain, as if by chance, at the tavern; scraped acquaintance with him; drank several bottles of wine and played a game of cards with him, the distinguished Frenchman conveniently losing. Then, arm in arm, with the old fellow the interesting stranger sauntered along the river bank, while Figura, who met the pair and bowed to the captain and spread the news that the Frenchman was a rich Huguenot gentleman, who had come to Switzerland to seek a Calvinist wife. He had been in Geneva, she said, but had found no lady to suit his taste, and now he was on his way to inspect the marriageable damsels of Zürich.

All went as Figura had hoped and the following day Wendelgard was pouring out her excited soul to her: how she had met the foreign nobleman, how he had sighed and kissed her hand at parting, how he owned a rent-roll of half a million Louis d'or, how with such an income even her extravagant habits would be harmless, how Solomon Landolt had said himself he needed a wife to help him, and she knew she would always, always be in debt! Figura listened smilingly, urged nothing, but advised Wendelgard to make up her mind quickly, for if the Frenchman should declare himself, she must be either

free to accept, or firm in her love for another. Artfully, Figura led her to beg for pen, ink and paper and the letter was written refusing Landolt in the time-honoured phrases: gratitude for his kindness and affection, her father had other plans for her, but she would love him as a sister and would always remember him with respect.

The next morning, the Frenchman had disappeared, but Solomon Landolt was saved from marriage and Figura Leu was radiant, even if her conscience pricked her! But the story was not ended yet; Martin Leu, when he played the Frenchman had been a little taken by Wendelgard's beauty and so he sought her out in Zürich, and, if she noticed a resemblance to a certain French traveller, she said nothing about it. Martin fell in love with her, but he behaved like a gentleman and a friend, for he asked Solomon's permission, was ready to go off without speaking, to leave the way clear for Solomon, friendship was friendship and so forth. But Solomon answered that, even for a woman and especially for a wife, yea should mean yes and nay ought to signify no—and there was no more about it. So Martin Leu married Wendelgard and carried her off to Paris.

Afterwards Figura, having confessed the plot and owned that Wendelgard had turned out a good wife, asked Solomon Landolt if he bore the chief plotter a grudge for having spoilt his chances? He held her hand a moment longer than usual and answered quietly: "No, it is best as it is!" Perhaps, after all, Wendelgard had not gone very deep in his heart, for when he mentioned her he always called her "The Captain" which proved he thought of her as appertaining to her unpleasant old father and is certainly no lover's name for a woman.

That same year, Solomon was twice the victim of love. The first time it was one Barbara Thumeysen who stirred his heart. Solomon had a pretty gift for painting and when in his spare hours, he was at work in his studio he had often listened to a fresh young voice singing in a garden near-by. He thought it was like a white throat's trill and in his mind he christened the songstress Mistress White Throat. He knew that she was

Pastor Thumeysen's daughter and when this personage arrived one day desiring to speak with him, he was not ill pleased. It seemed that Mistress Barbara had artistic tastes, her father had amused his leisure by making elegant pictures of birds, which he effected by sticking feathers on a cardboard and drawing and colouring the beaks, eyes and claws, and Barbara had continued this method. She made portraits of gentlemen and ladies, fashioning them with little pieces of cloth, silk and satin stuck on paper; the faces and hands she drew and painted. In fact, she was a highly artistic young lady. She had achieved a galaxy of distinguished personages: divines, dignitaries and patrician dames. Recently she had portrayed various military gentlemen, but when she had endeavoured to depict these warriors on horseback, the limitations of her powers had become apparent to her, she found she could not draw the horses for these officers to ride on. Therefore her father had come to beg Solomon Landolt, who was celebrated in the town for his equine pictures, to be so kind as to give Mistress Barbara a few lessons in drawing. Solomon, remembering the girl's clear voice, consented and after a few delightful afternoons spent in tuition, he realised that his heart was afire for the maiden and decided to make her his wife. Everyone thought the mating of two such votaries of art very suitable and the courting throve. One day Solomon's parents invited Pastor Thumeysen, his lady and Barbara to coffee and cakes and it was expected that the betrothal would take place. After the coffee had been enjoyed and many pointed allusions made to the impending announcement, Solomon begged Barbara to climb the stairs to his studio as he wished to show her his pictures. They went off, leaving their respective parents nodding and smiling in the expectation that in a short time the happy pair would return affianced. But it fell out far differently. Barbara at first took fright at the lay figure which was sitting in a chair in the studio dressed as a hussar, Landolt having been engaged on a war-piece. He reassured her, yet she seemed surprisingly unresponsive to his accounts of his pictures and sketches. He went on showing her studies of landscapes and effects of

light and shade. He was an enthusiastic lover of nature and a good painter. Suddenly Barbara interrupted him, crying out that he and she could never suit each other, and when he took her hand and begged her to explain, she flung away from him, declaring that if he painted such things, he could never really appreciate her simple art, and that he was full of phantastic ideas! In vain he protested that it was only a pleasant pastime, just like her drawing and pasting on cardboard. This but made matters worse, for Barbara imagined herself a remarkable artist, so she burst into tears and fled down to her parents in the parlour where, weeping loudly, she demanded to be taken home without delay. The more Landolt persuaded and expostulated, the more his parents asserted his excellence, the more Barbara wept, the more her parents sided with her.

The following afternoon, Landolt went to Pastor Thumeysen and his wife and asked to speak with their daughter. They told him that she had been alarmed at the lay figure, had disapproved of his pictures and had been pained at his wild talk of beauty in nature. In fact, his artistic theories did not tally with her inspiration, and they did not consider a man who painted from nature fitted to found a peaceful and respectable home. Barbara was sent for and she repeated her parents' indictment of Landolt, with tears in her silly eyes. Then she gave him her hand and said that if she married him it could only be on the condition that he promised to give up painting, she, for her part, being ready to renounce her artistic ambition! For a moment Landolt hesitated, then realising she was a conceited, self-satisfied little goose jealous of his pictures, he took his hat and bowed himself out, leaving her surrounded by her absurd patchwork portraits.

That was the end of Solomon Landolt's fourth endeavour to secure a wife.

The next episode, which took place in the same year, was his love of Columbine the Blackbird. He had noticed her one spring day, a year earlier when, his thoughts full of

Wendelgard, he had been sauntering beyond the town. She had been in the garden of her father's villa and he, pausing to listen to the twittering of the blackbirds, had seen her standing listening too. The grace of her attitude had lingered in his memory and one autumn day, disheartened and disgusted with Barbara, the White Throat, he had once more sought to shut out the bitterness of his mood by taking a country walk.

Passing through a wood, he plucked a wild columbine and something in the flower's delicacy instantly reminded him of the girl of whom he had occasionally thought, calling her the blackbird, because he had first seen her in the garden where the blackbirds had been singing. Yes, there was a likeness in the fragile columbine to the flower-like girl! He recollected that he had often thought of her, even during his courting of two other maidens! Perhaps the flower in his hand was meant by Providence to remind him — was sent by destiny to lead him to his happiness?

That evening he paid a visit to Columbine's parents with whom he was slightly acquainted. He talked pleasantly to the old people while Columbine, sitting sewing near-by, listened silently and sometimes threw him a friendly smile. At parting she gave him her hand—such a firm frank grasp, he thought! Yes, she was the wife for him! At last, he had found a quiet, simple, straightforward woman! Full of joy he constantly frequented the house, walked with Columbine, rode out with her and she treated him with such evident friendliness that he felt sure she loved him. He knew his love affairs had been much spoken of in the town and so, before declaring his passion, he made up his mind to tell her how it had all been. Thus one spring day, when they were riding together, he told her his four love-stories. Gently she answered: "Dear friend, you have been very unhappy!" Like a melody the kindly words echoed in his soul. At last, he had found happiness! But somehow he felt he could not speak his love just then, so he went home and wrote to her. Such a love-letter it was and so full of joy! She answered only one line:

"Come, I must speak with you.
Columbine."

He went to meet her in the spring-filled wood, feeling himself a god, a conqueror. He followed her down the narrow pathway, watching the grace of her slim figure. Columbine, Columbine! He had named her well, she was like a flower swaying in the breeze, he thought.

She halted abruptly, turned to him and gave him her hand. Then she thanked him for his love and trust in her, but he must find a greater happiness than she could ever give him. In return for his confidence she would confide in him. She told him how, a year ago, in Germany she had met her fate, but her parents refused their consent, for the man she loved was a young pastor without a living or even prospects. Drawing out a miniature which was hidden on her breast, she gave it to Landolt. Dumbly he gazed at the face of a young man with glowing eyes and a hectic flush on his cheeks. With a sigh he gave her back the miniature and listened silently to her explanation of why she had sought his company: all the time she had been but searching for a friend, who would help her to gain the only happiness which would be possible for her—marriage with this young pastor. She had heard that Landolt knew influential people in Germany and she had thought that he might help her. She pleaded she had never dreamed he could mistake her friendliness for a deeper feeling.

Columbine had reckoned well, Landolt put the thought of his love aside, perhaps he remembered the grand old motto: "Love serve." Anyhow he did all he could to serve the woman he loved, used his influence, wrote many letters to Germany, and finally procured a substantial living for his rival, persuaded Columbine's parents to revoke their decision and in six months' time she was married to her pastor.

After a few years, she returned to Zürich, a lonely widow, for the pastor's glowing eyes and hectic flush had been the heralds of death. Solomon remained her friend in sorrow

as in joy—but love's youth had faded, leaving him only kindness and gentle memories.

Frau Marianne listened without a word to the Landvogt's stories, tho' sometimes a snort of indignation betokened her opinion of the five fair ladies, but she promised to assist him in his phantastic plan of assembling his erstwhile flames to spend a day at the Landvogtei.

The last day of the month of May dawned fair and cloudless, the flag flew from the flagstaff on the ancient tower of Greifensee; two small canon were set up on the old wall, and Frau Marianne whisked about, marshalling the farm servants as tho' she had been a commander preparing for a battle. Kokko, the Landvogt's monkey, was dressed as an old woman in grey gown and starched apron while round his mobcap was a ribbon with the inscription: "I am Time." With Frau Marianne was a pretty boy, whom the Landvogt had caused to be dressed up as a coquettish serving-maid in frilled cap and snow white fichu, full skirts and neat buckled shoes. Indeed, too trim and well-favoured a maid for a bachelor's establishment! And the Landvogt hid a malicious smile whenever he chanced to look at the disguised boy.

Towards nine o'clock the canon thundered a salute of honour and there hove in sight a coach wherein sat Figura Leu. When it drew up before the door, Kokko, whom the Landvogt had been drilling assiduously for several days, sprang forward and presented Figura with a posey of roses, while the Landvogt, his three-cornered hat in his hand, his sword at his side, gallantly offered his arm to his dear Hanswurstel. "What does all this mean?" she cried, "flags and canon shots and Time showering roses! Alas! if it were but true!" Then, as she was still the dearest of all to him, the Landvogt confided his plan to her—at least so much of it as suited him. Frau Marianne received Figura kindly enough, after all the Hanswurstel had loved Landolt, but she cast threatening glances along the road towards the impending guests! "Foolish hussies and be damned to them!" she muttered.

Again the canon spoke as two coaches rumbled up to the door and Wendelgard, the Captain, descended from one and Salome, the Finch, alighted from the other. At sight of them, Frau Marianne's eyes grew hard as flint and her lip curled beneath the shadow which hostile observers might have called a moustache.

Then came Columbine and here Frau Marianne was more gracious, for altho' the Blackbird had given Solomon the go-by, she at least had been capable of a true love. But oh! how stern and unrelenting was Frau Marianne's gaze when the canon announced a fifth coach and Barbara, the White Throat, appeared!

The Landvogt received all the ladies with the same benevolent courtesy and led them to the parlour where bowls of lilies of the valley and roses filled the air with fragrance. At first the ladies looked askance at one another, for each had thought she would be the only guest, but soon curiosity broke the ice and they flitted about, looking at the pictures on the walls, appraising the furniture, peeping out of the windows to see what view they would have had if Fate had willed their lives otherwise. Then in swept Frau Marianne, followed by the immoderately pretty serving-wench with a tray of coffee and cakes and cream and pastry, and delicious kickshaws made of fresh country eggs and butter, and while the ladies ate, they scrutinized the serving-maid and thought their thoughts. Gradually it dawned on them that they had fallen into an ambush and they all grew a little nervous, laughed and blushed and their eyes asked Landolt the question which their lips dared not frame. Then he announced that, even for them, he could not neglect his work and must attend to some legal business, but, he added, as the cases for that day chiefly concerned matrimonial disputes, perhaps it would divert the ladies to listen to the proceedings?

Such a rustling of silken skirts as the five took their places behind Solomon Landolt's chair in his office! And how unwonted was the scent which was wafted thro' the bare little room, for each lady had her posey of roses which Kokko, the monkey, had presented. For years afterwards the villagers

talked of this unusual sitting and called it the "Assize of the Roses." The Landvogt tried the cases with so much kindly wisdom that the ladies must have felt a pang of regret at having jilted such a man! In these few pages, Gottfried Keller shows us with masterly touch the greatness of his Landvogt's personality. There is something of an eighteenth century King Solomon in his judgments; it seemed that God Almighty had given him too "a wise and an understanding heart" although He had denied our poor Solomon even one wife! Who knows? Perhaps Landolt's eccentric grandmother was right enough after all, and had the love of woman smiled upon him, he too might have gone astray, have worshipped the goddess Ashtaroth and never have kept so pure that "wise and understanding heart" of his?

After the "Assize of the Roses" the ladies trooped in to dinner, there were six high-backed chairs around the broad table and Frau Marianne, as major domo, was in waiting. She was splendid in her Tyrolese peasant costume: scarlet skirt, black velvet bodice, a silver crucifix upon her ample bosom, and old silver filigree ornaments upon her strong brown neck standing like a weather-beaten pillar between the white of the folded kerchief. The comely serving-maid flitted about directed by Frau Marianne's whispered commands. Frau Marianne's stern presence had a restraining effect upon the gaiety at first, but the succulent viands and the good wines soon banished severity and the ladies dined right merrily, while the Landvogt recounted stories of Greifensee in old warlike days, grim stories which seemed to enhance the feeling of peace and security in the sunlit dining room.

When dinner was over, he informed his guests that he had summoned them to give judgment in a very delicate matter. Time and fate had dealt leniently with him, he said smiling at the ladies. He told then the old heartache was stilled and all had been for the best, for had Salome taken him he would not have known the joy of hopeless love for Figura; and if Figura had become his wife, Wendelgard and Barbara would have remained strangers to him; and had

Columbine loved him—all five ladies would not have been dining with him that happy day. Rising, he drank to them, saying: "Long life to your dear hearts and your beautiful eyes oh! Salome, oh! Figura, Wendelgard, Barbara and Columbine!" They rose too, glass in hand to answer his toast and Figura whispered to him: "What are you after, you dear trickster?" and he whispered: "Quiet, my sweet Hanswurstel." When they had sunk back into their tall chairs, he gazed at them, smiling at the curiosity he saw in all five pretty faces.

"I have been told that an unmarried Landvogt is but half a man," he said, "I have been urged to marry at last and my choice hesitates between two ladies: an old one and a young one, and you must choose for me. The old one is my faithful housekeeper—Frau Marianne, the young one is the pretty maid who served you at dinner. Now, I pray you, consult together, dear friends! Here is a bell, when you have decided, ring it and I will return and hear my fate from your dear lips!"

The dear lips all moved at once:

"Why?"

"How?"

"Do you—?"

"Tell me this—"

"Do you love—?"

But Solomon Landolt was out of the room and had shut the door before any of the five questioners had time to finish her sentence!

Salome was against the whole thing. What an idea for the Landvogt to marry an old hussar like Frau Marianne or else a pert serving-girl! Such nonsense must be stopped! She, Salome, could easily find him a fitting wife. Columbine agreed and Salome darted a shrewd glance at her. "You'd take him yourself, I've no doubt!" she thought and said aloud: "Let us gain time! Let us call him in and tell him we must reflect!" She stretched out her hand for the bell, but Barbara held her back. "He must marry and who better than the old woman who looks after his house? It is not fitting for

him to marry a young wife!" she said. (Barbara was a nasty, jealous, little cat and an old maid besides!)

"Bah! the old horror!" cried Wendelgard who had lived in Paris and learned tolerance, "I vote for the young maid!" Then the four ladies spoke all at once and contradicted each other. Only Figura said nothing. She had thought the whole thing a joke at first, but now she felt sure the Landvogt had called them together to obtain the sanction of their friendship to his marriage with the pretty girl. Her heart ached and the tears welled up. She had long hoped for happiness for him and feared his happiness for herself. "My friends," she said quietly, "we are a pack of fools! He means to marry the young one; if we counsel otherwise, we shall get the announcement of his betrothal to the girl tomorrow all the same!"

So the matter was put to the vote: Salome, with her eye on Columbine, voted for the young one; Barbara, sourly, elected the old one; and Wendelgard chose the maiden; Columbine voted for Frau Marianne.

"Two votes for each," cried Salome, "Mistress Figura yours is the casting vote!"

"And I elect the young one," said Figura steadily.

After a minute the door was flung open in answer to the ladies' summons, and the Landvogt entered with Frau Marianne on his arm.

"You will have chosen wisely, I know," he said bowing, while Frau Marianne executed a series of the most extraordinary curtesies, "so I present to you the chosen one."

An awkward silence fell on the ladies, no one dared to say a word until Figura Leu spoke up and told him he was mistaken, t'was the young one who had won the election. "That cannot be," returned Landolt and he strode forward and rang the bell.

Frau Marianne burst into a loud laugh when the sham serving-maid stood on the threshold having resumed his own garments—a bashful but laughing boy.

"Oh! You trickster!" laughed Figura Leu, "you have managed to make fools of us all at last!"

"Well," said Landolt smiling, "as you have voted against the old candidate and the young aspirant is out of the question, as you see yourselves, I think I must remain true to—myself and go thro' life a bachelor!" He took each lady's hand and bowed over it, then gently kissed all five, one after the other, on the lips and none drew back, for each felt he had taken a gay revenge upon them!

The last picture of the Landvogt's party is like an old coloured-print: the five ladies are out in a boat on the Lake of Greifensee with the Landvogt, rowed by two strong peasant lads on the still waters wherein are mirrored the snow clad mountains. The ladies sing old songs and Landolt steers the boat silently, listening to the voices he loves so well.

Salomon Landolt lived to see his country overrun by foreign troops. The dream of liberty had been fermenting in all countries for years, and soon after the Landvogt had sat so peacefully at dinner with the five ladies, the Revolution broke out in France. One wonders whether Martin Leu, Wendelgard "the Captain's" husband, was with those heroic eight hundred Swiss Guards who perished in defending the Tuileries that August day of 1792? Gottfried Keller does not tell us. The Revolution surged over the border, stirring up the modern-minded men against the sleepy, aristocratic old-fashioned Bernese Government; France played into the drama; Bonaparte lent his hand to it; French troops occupied many parts of Switzerland; Swiss soldiers fought the invaders; some went over to them; the peasants rose against them; Austria came into the fray; Souvarov hastened from Italy to aid Austria against France. Switzerland was a battlefield. "La Révolution est finie, Monsieur!" said Napoleon to the Swiss envoy. The Emperor's views naturally differed from General Bonaparte's! But the result of the General's views had been disastrous to Switzerland.

All this Solomon Landolt saw before he died, saw too the end of all Landvogts, for the new system swept them away, in fact Solomon was one of the last of them. He had no more official work to do, but he rode about the country,

giving advice, smoothing out quarrels, negotiating between factions, helping thus to restore the war-rent land, playing his part grandly to the end. His last years were tranquil. There is a description of him which Keller wisely took direct from the old biography, for it is a delightful picture of the peace which old-age brings for the man to whom God has given "a wise and an understanding heart." On warm afternoons, that summer of 1818, the Landvogt would often sit alone beneath the plane trees on the hill, looking down into the valley where the reapers were at work in the cornfields. When the workers' voices came up to him, he softly whistled the glad melody of their songs, then slept like a tired reaper himself, for his harvest of days was gathered in and his soul rested upon a sheaf of memories. The autumn came and from his library window, dreamily he watched the leaves falling. The ivory figure of death, which had belonged to his eccentric grandmother, stood on his writing-table; for many years it had been in Figura Leu's keeping, a strange love-token, yet she had asked to have it; but Figura was dead this twenty years and so the grim, little figure had come back to Landolt. He pointed at it now: "The reaper has cut me down at last," he said and there was no regret in his voice.

Gottfried Keller brings us back to Herr Jacques, who having copied out the story of the Landvogt, has realised that he had best give up the ambition of being an original genius and he now seeks happiness in an ordered life. He marries and journeys to Rome for his honeymoon. Keller had never been in Rome. Possibly when we consider the construction of his body, we shall find an explanation of his curious lack of initiative in travelling. One would have expected a man with a mind so active, so alight with interest in investigation, to have wandered all over Europe, but Keller, after his Munich and Berlin years, save for one or two short sojourns in Vienna, hardly ever moved from Zürich and its neighbourhood. He never even explored the Berner Oberland! The short, feeble legs were inadequate bearers of those broad, heavy shoulders and that large head with the mane of dark hair thrown back from

the massive brow. He found all the needed in books, visualising what he wished to see, and probably, sitting at home in Zürich, he saw more with those short-sighted brown eyes of his, than nine tenths of the travellers who race from country to country in search of beauty or knowledge. Yet we recognise the wisdom which prompted him to keep the scenes of his books in the environment which he knew, for the few pages wherein Herr Jacques is depicted in Rome are colourless, and the description of the artist's studio by the Tiber, with peasants and students, all with guitars and tambourines, is wearisome and conventional, a stage-setting. Herr Jacques returns to Switzerland and, recounting his travels to his godfather, tells him how he became a godfather in his turn, this being the outcome of his visit to the Roman studio, where he had found the artist and his friends celebrating his wedding, the sturdy bambino being a feature of the rejoicings. Herr Jacques, very decorously shocked, had been induced to become godfather by Frau Jacques' pleading. Thus ends the story of Jacques and we are glad to get rid of him! Some lovers of Keller believe he was intended as a symbol of the presumptuous mediocrities of the world, who are only to be redeemed from absurdity by contact with the reality of beauty, which is represented by the stories told Jacques. This seems a little far-fetched and Jacques remains in most readers' minds as an example of Gottfried Keller's innate tendency to the didactic. After all, the most arduous Kellerite need not flinch before an honest opinion, it is surely a prouder attitude of homage to own that even the greatest writer fails sometimes.

CHAPTER VIII.

Ursula.

“**W**hen religions change, it is as though the mountains opened and the fabulous serpents, the golden dragons and the fairies appeared, but with them come forth monsters, evil spirits and a horde of vermin,” thus Gottfried Keller begins the story of Ursula. It is in this ‘Novelle’ that we have the study of the anabaptists, the “evil spirits and horde of vermin” which appeared along with the golden dragons and the fairies at the Reformation. The especial “golden dragon” of the story is Johann Zwingli, who is shown as a radiant figure against the dark and sordid background of the troubled times and the gross distortions of religion by the anabaptists. It is too an interesting picture of the Landsknecht days. Hansli Gyr the hero of the story is the best type of these soldiers of fortune, but we find other types of Landsknecht as well, there is the superannuated veteran and the baser sort of hirling soldier, intemperate and dissolute, though controlled by the stern rules of the reformed camp.

Keller makes us feel the surging unrest of a great change, with its inevitable disturbance of popular equilibrium and the dangerous absurdities and aberrations brought about by the misunderstanding and misapplication of new ideas which follow in the wake of change.

Hansli Gyr returned from Italy with the Swiss soldiery, who, finding that after the death of Leo X., the Papal commanders made their adherence to Luther an excuse for leaving them without pay, marched back in a body to Switzerland. They arrived in time for that famous discussion of religion at the Zürich Rathaus between Zwingli and the papist churchmen, a battle of words which Zwingli won and which caused the Zürich

councillors to declare their city on the side of the new religion.

Hansli Gyr turns off on his road to Zürich and makes for his home beyond Rapperswil. In Rapperswil he falls in with an old Landsknecht, who tells him of the madness which reigns in the country-side. He speaks bitterly of the sordid practices of the anabaptists and advises Hansli to go his way and not sadden his soul by witnessing the degradation of his formerly serious and simple-minded neighbours; but Hansli thro' all the years in Italy has cherished the memory of a peasant maiden, Ursula his neighbour's daughter; and so, heedless of the veteran's warning, he hastens homewards. We have one of Keller's charming love-scenes when Hansli finds Ursula tending his neglected homestead, but into this comes the warning note of the aberration nurtured by the anabaptists among the ignorant peasantry. Ursula tells Hansli she has prepared the wine soup for the following morning. It is the custom for the soldier's wife to have a wine-soup ready for the morning after a night of love with her newly returned warrior. Hansli answers that Ursula is his betrothed and not his wife, tho' please God she soon will be. But Ursula reproaches him for repulsing her and explains, in a jargon learned from the anabaptists, that the sinless know naught of worldly laws, and that two who love are man and wife. She reels off all this with a wild light in her eyes and it dawns on Hansli that her mind is deranged. He tells her he will ask her father for her hand, but that he means too honestly by her to take her at her word. He puts his arm round her and tries to lead her away, but when she realises that he intends to go to her father's house at once, she clings to the door-post crying vehemently: "Leave me here, leave me here!" Then, when he will not, she rushes away weeping like a frightened child.

At Ursula's home Hansli finds her father, Enoch Schnurrenberger, surrounded by a group of ill-kempt men. They receive him with a flood of jumbled biblical texts and incoherent exhortations mingled with invective of Zwingli, whom they accuse of being a renegade and a luke-warm prophet. Hansli sits listening, astonished and disgusted, until the mouthing fanatics, tired of their self-hypnotised pretence, shout for wine

and a "little worldly joy" as they call a pack of playing cards, abominable things representing monkeys, cats, demons and various gross indecencies. Herewith the self-styled prophets play on thro' the night and Hansli returns to his lonely home, sorrowful and perplexed.

The next morning Enoch Schnurrenberger comes to Hansli and announces that, as he has refused Ursula, he must him pay for the work done in tending the house since his parents' death. Hansli denies having rejected Ursula, protesting that he means to marry her as soon as possible, and upbraids Schnurrenberger for consorting with such vile creatures as he had seen with him the preceding night. Schnurrenberger's answers are a triumph of Keller's skill in exposing psychology: into the extravagances of religious mania is woven the peasant's grasping shrewdness; Schnurrenberger proclaims the coming Kingdom of God, wherein he and all the anabaptists are to be princes and stewards, and at the same time he endeavours to drive a hard bargain for Hansli's homestead. Hansli refuses and says he means to go to Zürich for a time and Schnurrenberger retorts that in future neither Ursula nor her mother shall move a hand to keep the homestead in order. They part in anger and Hansli locks up his house and goes to take leave of Ursula. Now we have a picture of the mother, a poor soul who half believes her husband's and his co-religionists' assertion of the coming glory of the anabaptists, and yet half doubts it, her native shrewdness not yet quite engulfed in the waves of delusion which are sweeping over the neighbourhood. She advises Hansli to follow Enoch Schnurrenberger and join the godly, and thro' it all we perceive that it is the mother's instinct fighting for her child's happiness, for she knows her daughter loves Hansli Gyr. Hansli goes into the house, finds Ursula and tells her he loves her deeply, but that he must go to Zürich to report himself to the commander of his company. She gazes at him in silence. Then he says he has forgotten to give her the ring he has brought for her from Italy. She lets him put it on her finger, but she says she can only wear it if he joins the community of the godly, yet she is willing to wait for him until he has grown used to such holiness. He

implores her to leave the false prophets, telling her bluntly he can have no truck with such impostors. She draws the ring from her finger, throws it on the floor and leaves him without a word. Hansli waits awhile, hoping she will return, then sadly and silently he goes his way.

We have next a scene in the Zürich tavern where the Landsknechts are assembled. In a corner sits one of the anabaptists. The Landsknechts discuss whether they will join the ranks of those who have banded together to protect the Reformed Faith in Zürich or whether they will return to Italy. They are interrupted by the anabaptist who announces the advent of the new Jerusalem and legions of angels with fiery swords. He promises too that each man shall have another wife, for the sinless are allowed all things! The Landsknechts greet this rigmarole with derisive laughter, but Hansli Gyr, reminded of the sorrow these detestable prophets have brought him, answers stoutly that he and his like have wrought havoc enough with their senseless preachings. Then he advises his comrades to stay in Zürich and keep order for the council.

"That is a good saying from a young warrior!" says a quiet voice. It is Master Ulrich Zwingli and Keller manages to impart to us something of the thrill which Zwingli's voice brought to thousands. Keller brings the reformer vividly before us, depicting him as a pure, strong man, whose being had kept a fragranciness of the mountain breezes and the fir trees of his native hill-lands; no austere and narrow theologian, but a man among men, a scholar and a thinker, a man of peace altho' he wrote that famous treatise on the duties of a commander in warfare. Like all leaders of men, be they saints, politicians or warriors, Zwingli had evidently the gift of personal magnetism, and, as he speaks to the Landsknechts in the tavern, their loud voices fall and they listen eagerly, while he tells them that the honour of the soldier is the defence of his country, not the spilling of blood.

The next day the Landsknecht troop is disbanded and each man takes up some peaceful avocation, altho' always prepared to buckle on their swords or shoulder their halberds should the council of Zürich have need of them. Hansli Gyr remains

in Zürich among the city guards and hears many of those grand sermons preached by Zwingli, sermons which had the simplicity of great literature and hence were loved by the scholarly and understood of the people.

Keller tells us how the second religious discussion takes place in Zürich that autumn of 1523, how it is followed by the destruction of the saints' statues, and how a year afterwards, when the Cathedral treasury is handed over to the state, a sale is held of the hoarded beauty of centuries. One feels that Meister Gottfried, Calvinist tho' he was, mourned over the dispersion of these treasures: golden monstrances, jewelled statuettes of saints, gold and silver chalices, crosses of heavy gold, grandly wrought thuribles, reliquaries rich with precious stones and a veritable cataract of vestments, silken chasubles stiff with gold thread, amices with fur borders, embroidered altar-cloths, jewelled crosiers, all the trappings of idolatry as the Reformers called them, but oh! so beautiful!

They hold a market of these precious things, anabaptists and whores finger them, pedlars bargain for them, the rabble turns them over and honest Hansli Gyr buys a woven carpet for the home he dreams of setting up with Ursula some day.

Now comes the scene where Ursula, having cut the hay in Hansli's fields, is attacked by a lustful anabaptist, who, calling her the daughter of Zion, proposes to be her husband without delay! She routs him with the hay-fork, but no sooner one prophet disposed of, she is importuned by a second snivelling "saint." She tells him she is affianced to the Angel Gabriel, "who is slim and tall and beautiful," but the prophet will not take nay for nay and the pitchfork is about to be applied to him too, when Schnurrenberger comes crying out that the godless are in pursuit of the children of light. He and the anabaptist fly in terror, leaving Ursula to her hay-making. It is a false alarm, but it releases Ursula and she lies down among the hay and falls asleep and Hansli Gyr finds her thus. She awakens and greets him as the Angel Gabriel, her lord and bridegroom! It is one of the maddest of mad scenes. She kisses Hansli passionately, talking incoherently the while of angels and prophets and of the Kingdom of Heaven on earth and always

calling him Lord Gabriel. Hansli does not know how to answer the distraught maiden, who is so sweet and tender and whom he loves ardently and sorrowfully. Is she really mad or is she playing some cruel game with him?

Hand in hand the Landsknecht and the mad girl go to his deserted homestead. She tells him her sweetheart is there, and that she will show him to her Lord Gabriel. His name is Hansli, she says, and he lives there in the dark. She bends down by the door and calls thro' the keyhole: "Hansli! Hänslein!" Then she sings a snatch of a song, but checks herself hurriedly saying it is an ungodly thing. At that moment a ripe chestnut falls from the tree near the house and with a cry she rushes away calling to Hansli, whom she names Lord Gabriel, to save himself, for the other lover is coming.

It is piteous in the highest degree and Keller's handling of it is masterly. Masterly too are the succeeding pages where Hansli speaks with Ursula's mother, trying to make her see that the sham prophets have driven the poor child mad with their mummery. She answers obstinately that he does not understand such holy matters, but again, when Hansli has gone off in despair, the mother's tenderness pierces the mist of delusion and she mutters: "At least the child has had a happy hour for once!"

At length the anabaptists, who have drawn upon them the ire of the Zürich council, are arrested and imprisoned in a tower. Religious persecution doubtless, but the fanatics have set the whole country-side by the ears.

Hansli watches the procession of prisoners on its way from the judgment hall to the tower. Schnurrenberger and his wife are among them, Ursula too, who is howling with the rest: "Help Jerusalem! Help Zion!"

For days this howling continues and the anabaptists, refusing to hear reason, are kept in prison and there is talk of hanging a few of them.

Hansli Gyr resolves to rescue Ursula. He thinks that if he can separate her from these madmen she will come to her sane senses. So one night he manages to slip into the tower. All is still, guards and prisoners are asleep. Hansli steps over

the snoring prophets and their prophetesses and finds Ursula sleeping on the dirty straw. She opens her eyes and gazes at him, then "as if in a dream of a dream" she rises and follows him, but some of the others have woken too, and like lemures they glide out after Hansli and Ursula. He stops to refasten the prison door, leaving hold of Ursula's hand, and when after an instant he turns, she has vanished! Anger and disgust fill Hansli's soul and he vows to thrust from him the thought of his insane sweetheart.

The wars between the reformed Zürichers and the Catholics broke out, the Kappeler wars, so called because the Protestants were encamped at Kappel, a hamlet between Zug and Zürich. The first Kappeler war was bloodless, the opponents remained in their camps and a patched-up peace was effected by Zwingli. But the reformed troops lingered on at Kappel. It was a camp of religious men, singing psalms, praying and quoting the Bible at every turn. Among the men-at-arms were some who had little taste for this austerity, but rigid discipline held them in check and the camp was like a prayer-meeting of armed men. Thus, later on, were the Puritan camps in England, or the army of Gustavus Adolfus of Sweden, but in the year 1529 it was a new thing for soldiers to be godfearing.

Hansli Gyr was one of Zwingli's most faithful adherents, he had become a typical soldier of the reformed faith. Zealous and pious, he prayed perhaps too much and with too solemn a face, was over-ready with biblical allusions, over-severe with any Landsknecht caught philandering with a peasant wench. He was certainly self-righteous, but honest and conscientious. Sober and continent he avoided wine and women, and yet—the ways of Fate are mysterious—his one lapse from temperance was destined to bring back his thoughts to Ursula, whose madness had made so sorrowful and stern a man of him. One day he was passing near a base tavern, when some men at arms, who were drinking there, called him to join them. They were of the less godly sort and they harboured a spite against Hansli for his severity and hoped to lure him from his self-righteous path for once. Hansli, thinking he might have a restraining influence upon his comrades, accepted

their offer of a jug of wine and sat down with them in the tavern.

The good wine tingled in Hansli's veins, he was weary, the afternoon was sultry and he was unused to liquor nowadays. He called for another jug and it was brought by the handsomest woman he had ever seen. This was Freska of Bergamo, a light woman celebrated for her amorous adventures, as the Landsknechts knew, but Hansli had never heard of her. He was a fine fellow and Freska, finding him pleasant to look upon, sat down near him and talked gayly. A fresh jug of wine was fetched, then another and another. The sun sank, soon the bugles would ring out summoning the soldiers to the camp for evening prayer, but Hansli lingered on with Freska, talking and drinking. The other Landsknechts took their leave, they went off laughing and nudging each other and muttering lewd comments on Hansli and Freska. Hansli had fallen into their trap more completely than they had deemed possible!

Hansli made passionate love to Freska; in his wine-heated brain the idea of marrying her took shape—and meanwhile—well, meanwhile she was lying in his arms! Then he noticed a slim gold ring on her finger, the counterpart of that he had given Ursula. He asked Freska whence she had the ring, and she answered, with brazen indifference to the situation, that her betrothed, an Italian bandit, had given it her. She added that she was only waiting to have saved enough money to set up a wine-shop with him. At present he was in gaol, having been arrested for murder. Hansli exclaimed she could not marry a murderer, but she replied calmly: "Why not? He is not a bad man, but unfortunate and wild and he needs a woman to take care of him. I love him, see you."

It came to Hansli, with a shock of surprise, that this wanton, who lay in his arms, loved better, more nobly than he with all his pride of virtue! She was faithful—after her fashion—to the man she loved—while he, Hansli the godly, had turned from a pure and loving woman because, in her deluded weakness, she had been led astray, lured to madness, poor child!

He put Freska from him, abruptly bade her good-night and fled back to the camp, and the next morning when his

comrades jeeringly asked him if they had not done him a good turn, he answered steadily: "Yes, better than you know, my friends."

In Chapter V we are brought back to Schnurrenberger's house where we find the anabaptists at the height of their absurdity. Taking literally the biblical injunction "to be as little children" these elderly maniacs were pretending to be infants. One lay flat on the floor, toying with small pieces of wood and gurgling: "lo lo lo, da da da;" others hopped about sucking their thumbs or shaking baby's rattles; one fat lout had been sly enough to have chosen to pretend he was a babe in the cradle, and so he lay at his ease on a heap of sacks and played with his grimy toes. Ursula's mother was cooking, she stood before the stove, a dirty rag-doll tucked under her arm, and askew on her grey head was Ursula's christening cap. This travesty was both ludicrous and pathetic, for the jaunty little cap contrasted cruelly with the expression of sorrowful perplexity on the old woman's face.

Ever and anon the whole crew of deluded beings left their inane mumming and, joining hands, danced round together bleating puerile rhymes in their cracked voices.

Ursula sat by the stove, rocking a small, wooden figure of St. Sebastian in her arms. It had been looted from some Catholic chapel by the anabaptists and, ever since, Ursula had clung to it. She had bandaged its red-painted wounds with rags, and she called it her Lord Angel Gabriel, perhaps seeing something in the image's blue eyes and flaxen hair which recalled Hansli to her befogged mind. She was invariably dressed for a journey nowadays and always had a stout staff beside her, for she said, that she and her Lord Gabriel would travel to paradise as soon as he was recovered from his wounds.

Towards dusk the anabaptists indulged in their habitual evening "half hour of worldly joy," meaning wine and cards for the prophets. They put away childish things and drank, gambled and fought like grown men. Ursula remained crooning over her ungainly doll, whispering that it was her dear Lord Gabriel, her Heavenly Bridegroom.

The prophets were interrupted in their card-playing by a

neighbour who burst in shouting that Hansli Gyr the Landsknecht was riding thro' the land, calling all men to arms, for the papist army was marching against Zürich.

"Up, you dotards!" the man cried, "leave your fool antics! If the soldiers catch you, you'll be the first to be hanged as heretics!"

The anabaptists rushed out of the house and stood listening to the clanging of distant bells, bugle calls and shouting. The dusk was deepening and the sounds came clear on the still evening air.

At mention of Hansli Gyr a change had come over Ursula, it was as tho' the name had roused her soul from a lethargy. Gradually her eyes cleared, and the vacant look fell away from her face. She rose, stood a moment unsteadily, as one rudely wakened from deep sleep, then quietly she laid St. Sebastian down, grasped her staff and went out into the dusk.

We follow Ursula across the fields and thro' several hamlets. In one of these she fell in with a company of Landsknechts marching to rejoin the camp at Kappel. Like a shadow Ursula flitted after them.

In the market place of Kappel she saw Hansli Gyr, giving out weapons to peasant volunteers, ordering here and there, consulting gravely with anxious men. She hid among the crowd of onlookers and watched him for hours. She remembered later that this had been the first time she had fully recognised him since he returned from Italy.

She followed the soldiers and saw Master Ulrich Zwingli riding among them, and she said afterwards that the sight of that grand calm face, with the steadfast, sorrowful eyes had brought her far up the road to sanity.

All thro' the battle of Kappel Ursula hid in a hollow tree-trunk, listening to the thud of running feet, to the shouts, to the clash of steel, to the thunder of horses' hoofs. Like a hurricane the battle swept past her hiding-place. How long she cowered there she never knew, nor why, nor how the fog in her soul was banished by that long spell of terror, but when at last the tumult abated and she crept out, she was sane once more, her whole being set upon one thing only: to find Hansli Gyr

her beloved, not Lord Gabriel the Angel, but Hansli the man she loved.

Gottfried Keller pauses in his narration to give us a picture of Ulrich Zwingli as he lay dying on the battle field, his eyes fixed upon the cloud-banks which moved serenely across the October sky. Great banks of grey cloud they were, which the setting sun touched at the rim to a band of flame; other cloud floated into them and these seemed like misty figures passing in procession. Zwingli thought they were the figures of the heroes he had dreamed of all his life; not only the saints of the Old and New Testament, but as he had once written to François I: "the heroes of the world, Hercules and Theseus, Socrates, Aristides and Numa, Pindar too." For Ulrich Zwingli loved all true greatness and his just mind knew not the barriers of prejudice.

Ursula searched through the battlefield, where the vanquished Reformed army lay in blood-stained heaps. She peered into hundreds of dead faces and when the darkness fell, she stole a torch from some picket's fire and searched on and on. At last she found Hansli lying as one dead. Gently she raised his shoulders, listened at his lips if he still breathed, loosened his corselet as best she could, then, pillowing his head on her bosom, she set herself to wait, praying that help should come and whispering to him: "Hansli, my Hansli."

And help came, a couple of Landsknechts from the Catholic army found them thus and recognised Hansli as a comrade of long ago when they had chanced to be fighting for the same master. So they bore him to a neighbouring convent and he was nursed back to life by the gentle nuns and by Ursula, his beloved.

Hansli and Ursula lived long and happily in the old home-stead, where she had once told Lord Gabriel the Angel that her sweetheart was hiding. Their children played beneath the chestnut tree before the house, and if a wandering anabaptist came to the door, Ursula would give him kind words, a sup of wine and a shy smile, not reviling him for his fool sayings, her clear mind secure and tranquil in the sober faith which Hansli had learned from Master Ulrich Zwingli.

CHAPTER IX.

Keller and Brahms. Final version of the "Grüne Heinrich." The Sinngedicht. The Story of Salome. Regine.

"**U**rsula" is a fine study, but, as both Paul Heyse and Theodor Storm wrote to Keller, the end is too sudden. Keller excused himself in a letter to Heyse, owning the justice of this criticism but saying that the publisher had hurried him. To Storm he replied: "You are quite right about "Ursula," but the Christmas book-market was sitting on my back, and I had to break off thus abruptly!" Keller's friends could not help smiling when he advanced such excuses, for in spite of the improvement brought about by the Staatsschreiber time of mental drilling, he was still the most unpunctual of authors. It was as if he could not keep to a settled date for delivering his work. There were interruptions in his continuity in all things concerning pen and paper, which in a smaller mentality would have appeared to have arisen from caprice, but with Keller was a sort of inevitable intermission. It was thus too with his letters; he would begin a letter, write long at it—and suddenly lay it by for months—then, unexpectedly, he would take it up again and write on, in absolutely the same strain of thought as two or three months before. Doubtless there was so much going on in that great active brain, that things got crowded out—mislaid—but only for a time, the very activity of his brain and the entire sincerity of his character brought about the conscientiousness which made him finish what he had begun. It is interesting to see how writing was always a task to him, a beloved task, but a task for all that. Sometimes he grumbled like a lazy school-boy at his pensum, especially he was wont to complain at having

to answer letters. Some years after Keller's death his letters appeared in Baechtold's Biography and some one remarked to Johannes Brahms how touching a sign of friendship Keller's correspondents must see in their length and careful workmanship. Brahms replied that one need not be misled by that, he had heard Keller sighing and grumbling over the nuisance of letter writing.

Brahms and Keller were full of admiration for one another, but they did not know each other intimately; yet there was something akin in these two men, even physically there was a similarity of type: the same short build, the big heads, the mass of hair flung back from the broad brows. Brahms' large blue eyes and Keller's short-sighted brown eyes, under the heavy lids, were unlike of course. There was a resemblance also in the fates of the two men, both great poets, one of sound, the other of words; one, beside all the rest of his deathless music, made the most beautiful love-songs of the world; the other wrote some of the finest and subtlest love-scenes of literature, it was his indeed

"Süsse Frauenbilder zu erfinden
Wie die bitt're Erde sie nicht hegt."

And both were lonely, neither found the love of a woman, though Johannes Brahms knew the joy and pain of a life-long devotion to one woman—Clara Schumann, who gave him friendship lavishly—love never! And in their work is there not a kinship? In the depth, the wealth of thought, the triumph of sincerity, in the colour of it all, is there not a resemblance? If Brahms had written words, if Gottfried Keller's thought had been translated by sound, would they not have said something of the same? After all, the music a man makes, the books a great author writes are part of the eternal harmony of the universe, of that "song which has no sound" to us, but which goes up to God Almighty.

Gottfried Keller's letters fill two large volumes for all his dislike of correspondence. He wrote to the friends of his youth; for years he kept up a correspondence with Ludmilla Assing, Varnhagen's niece; his letters to Theodor Storm and Paul

Heyse fill many printed pages; he wrote to Conrad Ferdinand Meyer; to Rodenberg, the editor of the *Deutsche Rundschau*; to Wildenbruch; long literary letters to Emil Kuh, the critic, whom he did not know personally; and to several friends in Vienna, besides the many business letters which he wrote to publishers. All this with his own hand, there was no eager secretary to help him. He and Regula lived alone together in the house on the Bürgli; she steadily refusing to take a servant, although she was growing old and frail and the walk to and from the market was very tiring. She began to talk of taking a house in the town again, it was fatiguing for Gottfried too, she said, to toil up that long road late at night after he had been sitting in the Meise Inn. For the "golden lion," the Rhine wine, still tempted him and he sat in the tavern till very late, then took his way to the Bürgli where Regula waited, at a first floor window, to let down the house-key to him in a little basket on a long string. But at first Keller turned a deaf ear to her proposal of moving into Zürich.

After the "Züricher Novellen" Keller undertook the remodelling of "Der grüne Heinrich," "der grüne Esel" as he called it when he was irritated, which was not seldom! For about two years he laboured at the new version. The remaining copies of Version I. were burnt at his request. He is reported to have said: "May the hand wither which dares revive the first setting!" But, like most authors, he was often more vivid in speech than he intended, and fortunately there have been found publishers courageous enough to risk withered hands and Version I. has reappeared.

The second and final Version of the "Grüne Heinrich" was published at Christmas 1880 and Keller started work on the "Sinngedicht" which he had begun twenty years before in Berlin. He had then even signed a contract with the publisher Duncker, Betty Tendering's brother-in-law. Ever since the Dunckers had urged him, to finish the book, but he had hung back, and now the Duncker firm was on the downward grade and Keller had learned to be more of a man of business during his Staatsschreiber time, so he finally bought back the contract from Duncker, whose firm failed shortly afterwards.

Directly the "Grüne Heinrich" was completed Rodenbach wrote asking for the "Galathee Novellen," Keller's first name for the "Sinngedicht," and a new contract was signed.

The "Sinngedicht" is one of Gottfried Keller's best known works. It is symbolical and yet realistic, it illustrates the problem which constantly preoccupied Keller: the relationship between sensuality and modesty, the adjustment of a woman's soul between purity and passion. Keller realised that the noblest type of womanhood is neither prudish nor brazen, but a free, passionate, pure and joyful being, and Logau's epigram seemed to embody this ideal:

"Wie willst du weisse Lilien zu roten Rosen machen?
Küss eine weisse Galathee: sie wird errötend lachen."

In Berlin Keller came across this epigram in Lessing's republication of the neglected seventeenth century poet Logau's "Deutsche Sinngedichte" and the project of writing a series of novellen to unfold its meaning had formed in his mind. Like other projects it lay dormant for many years, dormant but not dead.

Keller interpreted Logau's meaning thus: Galathea, the lily, symbolical of purity, when kissed will blush and thus become a red rose; but purity being compatible with, indeed incomplete without, joyousness, the ideal woman will laugh and blush. Curiously enough this rendering of Logau's meaning rests upon a misprint or misquotation in the Lessing edition which gives it as: "errötend lachen," whereas in Logau's own setting in his "Salomons von Golaw's Teutsche Sinngedichte" it is: "errötet lachen," which clearly indicates that Logau's thought was occupied with Pygmalion's Galathea, the statue brought to life by the kiss of passion, and thus both blush and laugh were signs of awakened life and had a more direct and simple meaning than in Keller's symbolical interpretation. This difference in the texts of Logau's epigram had been unnoticed by Keller biographers until Kalbeck's collection of Paul Heyse and Gottfried Keller's Letters appeared in 1919, where in an unpretentious note to Heyse's letter on the "Sinngedicht" (Letter 49 June 1881) this is explained. However

Keller chose to take it as he did and his meaning in his "Sinngedicht" was that the prude when kissed will blush without laughing, the grosser natured woman will laugh without blushing, and this is the recurrent theme in the book.

The "Sinngedicht" is constructed in the manner which always appealed to Keller: a number of stories, individually independent in subject, are framed in a consecutive story. The *Seldwyla Novellen* are held together by unity of scene; the *Züricher Novellen* are connected by Herr Jacques' story and the "Sinngedicht" by the story of Reinhard's quest for the ideal woman, who according to the epigram, would both laugh and blush at a man's first kiss.

The "Sinngedicht" has an honourable ancestry in literature. The Italian humanists of the renaissance adopted this form from the classic Greek and the Latin epigrams. The French poets of the renaissance used it often, especially Clément Marot; but in Germany, where it had flourished in monkish days, it had gradually been forgotten, though it's bastard descendants existed in the people's proverbs. Then in the seventeenth century it was revived by Logau. Roused to anger over the degradation of his countrymen during and after the Thirty Years War, he attacked them with his rapier-like satire, ridiculing them for their "schnöde Kriecherei," (disgusting cringing) mocking their aping of foreign ideas, modes and manners "à la mode Kleider, à la mode Sinnen." But among his "Teutsche Sinngedichte" there are aphorisms in verse which are full of wisdom and not merely satire of contemporary foibles.

After Logau the Sinngedicht form was not suffered to perish in Germany, Hagedorn used it, Lessing too and both Goethe and Schiller wrote many epigrams, while in the nineteenth century the brothers Schlegel, Platen and Hebbel often employed this form. The idea of grouping stories together by having them recited by a circle of friends is an ancient literary tradition, we remember the *Decamerone*, the *Canterbury Tales*, the *Heptameron*, and Goethe's "Unterhaltungen deutscher Ausgewanderten." Thus Keller's "Sinngedicht" was not new in form. The first six chapters are taken up by the "frame

story" itself: Reinhard, a student of natural science, is in his laboratory, which is minutely described. His eyes have been paining him and the doctor has warned him that he will have to rest them, or serious trouble may ensue. For years Reinhard has lived only for study and experiment, the life of a recluse. The day whereon the story opens he feels a sharp pain shoot through his eyeballs and he resolves to allow himself the prescribed relaxation, but years of study have alienated him from worldly life and he does not know how to occupy his leisure. He takes up a volume of Lessing's works and, idly turning the pages, comes across Logau's epigram:

"Wie willst du weisse Lilien zu roten Rosen machen?
Küss' eine weisse Galathee: sie wird errötend lachen."

He takes this as an answer to his questioning, instead of scientific research he is to experiment in human nature, so he orders a horse and prepares for an expedition into the country. He takes the epigram, copied on a slip of paper, and sets out on his quest for a woman who will laugh and blush when he kisses her.

His first adventure is with a toll-bar keeper's daughter on the river bridge; she bandies words with him and finally allows him to kiss her. She laughs but does not blush and Reinhard goes on his way, his first experiment a failure.

He comes to the house of a pastor he has known long ago and finds that the pastor's daughter, whom he dimly remembers as a pretty child, has grown to be a lovely girl. After the midday meal Reinhard slips into the garden and enters into conversation with the maiden. She begs him, as she hears he means to ride about the country, to deliver a letter for her and describes the house whither he must take it. He consents but tells her he is under a vow to kiss each pretty girl he sees! At first she shrinks from him, yet when he draws her to him, she kisses him of her own free will, blushing like a red rose, but without laughing. Then she escapes like a frightened doe. Reinhard, having taken leave of the pastor and his wife, rides away, the second experiment having been unsuccessful.

He comes to a country inn, and thinking his horse requires

a feed, he draws rein and enters the courtyard. He finds a handsome woman sitting sewing in the porch, and begins talking and laughing with her. Her conversation is a mixture of coquetry, defiance, shrewdness and foolishness. He asks her for a kiss, but, after she has bantered and fooled with him for some time, he comes to the conclusion that she will laugh when he kisses her, but certainly not blush, and so he leaves her without trying to kiss her and rides on to seek the house where he has promised to deliver the letter.

After a long time of wandering through fields and lanes he enters a wood. The day in the fresh air has made him sleepy and he almost thinks he is dreaming when he unexpectedly emerges from the wood and finds himself on a wide terrace before a stately house. In the middle of the terrace is a fountain and sitting on the fountain's rim is a woman dressed in white with a broad straw hat shading her face. For a moment Reinhard and the lady gaze at each other in silence, then she comes forward and asks him his business. Thinking, as the house answers the pastor's daughter's description, that he must have reached his destination, he dives into his pocket and takes out what he believes to be the letter, but no sooner has he handed it to the lady than, to his consternation, he perceives that he has given her the paper with the Logau epigram. The lady reads it and, without a word, returns it to him. Stammering excuses, he presents the letter to her. When she has finished reading it she looks at him inquiringly and says she fails to comprehend his meaning: first he gives her an unintelligible verse, then he delivers a letter from her friend, asking her for radish seeds, which is evidently an excuse for writing, as she frequently sees the pastor's daughter and there can be no hurry for radish seeds at this time of year! However, as the day is far spent, she feels it incumbent upon her hospitality to offer him supper and a lodging for the night.

Reinhard accepts and, as he follows his hostess to the house, he realises that he would gladly try Logau's experiment upon her fresh lips.

He is taken to a room to rest before supper and a message is brought him that he is welcome to look at the adjoining

rooms if he wishes. He takes the opportunity of asking the maid who brings the message what the lady's name is, and is told it is Mistress Lucie, and that she lives here with her uncle, an old colonel.

After he has washed and rested he takes advantage of the permission to explore the adjoining rooms, and thus he comes on what he considers the strangest library for a lady. It is only strange because Herr Reinhard believes a woman's library should contain nothing but light literature and cookery books! At any rate his interest in Mistress Lucie is increased by discovering St. Augustin, Pliny the younger, Jean Jacques, Goethe, Jung Stillings *Lebensgeschichte*, many books on history and art, works on Middle High German, old French romances, and volumes in Dutch, Spanish and Portuguese.

Full of surprise at Lucie's taste in literature, while he is leading her to supper he blurts out: "Why do you read such books?" and gets a haughty look as reward for his question. He reflects that he has really meant: "You beautiful woman, can you find nothing better to do than to pore over books?" It is the question which many men put to a woman who prefers books to male inanities, but Reinhard, being a scholar himself, ought not to have asked such a question. At any rate he gets no answer.

As they sit down to supper Lucie tells him her uncle is laid up with the gout, but hopes to have the pleasure of seeing him on the morrow. The atmosphere is constrained and chill at the beginning of supper. The buxom maid servants, having carried in the meal, sit down with Lucie and Reinhard and she explains that they all live and eat together as in patriarchal days. Whereat Reinhard rushes on his fate, declaring that far from objecting he is delighted, as it helps him in his cure.

"What cure?" demands Lucie and he replies: "The cure of my eyes, which will be greatly assisted by looking at beautiful women!"

This does not improve matters, the maids seem embarrassed and Lucie is visibly annoyed. Noticing that he has blundered again, Reinhard tries to save the situation by explaining his quest. He recounts his two experiences and concludes by

telling of his visit to the Waldhorn Inn, where he had not tried to kiss the handsome woman, feeling sure she was over-bold and would not blush. Lucie has been listening in growing resentment. Springing up, she asks angrily whether he intends to continue his tasteful experiments in her house? She rates him soundly and the serving-maids cast him sour looks. Seeing he has bungled, he offers to leave the house forthwith. Lucie at first accepts this, then recollecting that it is past nightfall, she hesitates, and Reinhard takes the opportunity to protest he is no impertinent philanderer, and that if she sends him off, it will seem as though she were frightened of him or else brand him as an impudent rascal. He assures her he means no disrespect and urges that the fact of his confiding his quest to her so frankly must be a proof of his honest intention in her house. Lucie is mollified and having demanded the paper with the offending verse and burnt it at the candle, she bids the serving-maids fetch their spinning wheels and says that, as a sign of reconciliation, she will tell him the story of the woman at the Waldhorn Inn.

It is a pretty setting for a story: the maids spinning and the soft burr of their wheels as accompaniment to Lucie's voice as she tells the story:

"The beautiful but overweeningly conceited peasant girl, Salome, imagined herself cleverer and more witty than everybody else. She led on Drago, the peculiarly vacuous son of a wealthy citizen, whose favorite pose was that of the accomplished lady killer. The Waldhorn Inn was the haunt of the young sparks of the town, partly because the wine was good there and partly because of the beauty of Salome, the innkeeper's daughter. They thought it diverting to pay her extravagant compliments, for she always had a silly answer! The only man she favoured was Drago, who was almost as foolish as she and believed himself to be extraordinarily clever. One evening a number of young fops were drinking at the inn, when Drago took it into his head to make them think he had a rendez-vous in the wood near-by. He went off into the dark and when he heard his companions slinking after him, as he had hoped they would, he began cooing love-words and answering himself in

a feigned voice, and started smacking his lips loudly, imitating the sounds of kisses. Then he lisped the name of Salome, among many terms of endearment, oblivious that he was compromising an honest, if shallow, young woman. But what was his surprise when he felt himself encircled by two vigorous arms, and his silly lips were met by a warm mouth! It was Salome, who had been sitting in the wood before he came and who now seized the opportunity of nailing Master Drago down to an engagement with her. Drago's comrades burst in upon this tender scene. They had procured a lantern and they turned the light upon the sham lovers. It all started as a vulgar prank, but as Salome's parents, her stalwart soldier-brother and a crowd of ostlers and peasants had followed the city gentlemen, Drago was in an awkward quandary. The brother's manner was unpleasant and Drago, fearful of getting a horse-whipping, willy-nilly announced his betrothal to Salome.

Drago's indulgent parents made no difficulty about accepting their future daughter-in-law, but they stipulated that she should spend six months in a friend's house in the town, to accustom her to city manners. Poor Salome did her best, but being the most silly of conceited creatures, she became the laughing-stock of the town and her nonsensical sayings were quoted everywhere. They nicknamed her "the camel" as being the most unintelligent animal they could think of.

One afternoon Salome and Drago were lolling together on a divan. The conversation had languished and gradually the lovers, who were stupider one than the other, had fallen asleep. Every now and then the lady roused herself sufficiently to yawn loudly, and this disturbed Drago who woke and remarked irritably: "Is that all you can say?" She tried to kiss him, but he pushed her away and cried rudely: "Try to say something to amuse me!"

Much piqued she retorted: "If you said something funny I should know how to answer!"

And her swain replied in a cross voice: "Camels dont answer!"

"Who is a camel?" she queried sharply.

"Oh darling, the whole town calls you the camel!" he said.

"And you think I am one too?" she asked. He saw he had gone farther than he had intended and putting his arm round her he murmured: "Yes surely, but the dearest, sweetest camel in the world!"

Now, Salome still thought she was celebrated for her cleverness, while she despised her beauty, as people so often disregard what they have and pride themselves on what they have not! So the news that she was called "the camel" and laughed at and considered a silly creature, cut her to the quick. Without a word she got up from the divan, tore off the bracelets and rings her betrothed had given her and flung out of the house. She stopped at the door and spat on the threshold in true peasant fashion, then bursting into tears she ran weeping through the town, and never drew breath until she reached the Waldhorn Inn, where she locked herself into her room for three days and three nights. "And now," concluded Lucie, "she affects to look down on all men and boasts that she can always take them in and make fools of them. That is why she led you on, while you thought you were studying her. For even a foolish woman is generally cleverer than a learned man!"

There was a pause after Lucie had finished speaking. Reinhard felt that her description of Salome was a veiled reproof to him, and certainly her sarcastic tone, when telling of Drago and Salome kissing in the wood, seemed to him to debase the kiss to an inane vulgarity, whereas in his account of the experiment he had undertaken, he had tried to show her that he regarded it as a symbol and as a key to the mystery in a woman's nature. He tried to excuse Salome, saying that through her experience, her foolishness had been lessened, in that, as he had seen, she had grown more self-restrained. Lucie answered sharply, that Salome had fallen between two stools: she was too citified for a peasant's wife, too rustic for a town gentleman's. Reinhard pleaded that nevertheless a husband should be found for her, one who with love and gentleness would teach her a quiet and reasonable mind; that for this an educated man would be best fitted, and that he did not believe difference of worldly station mattered. After all, a quiet mind was the best attribute for a woman. Lucie demanded, almost angrily, whether he prized

it more than beauty in a woman? Reinhard's answer is one of the profoundest truths Keller ever penned: it is not beauty which is important in love, but the chief thing is that each lover's face should deeply and truly please the other. If this happens, it is the greatest thing in the world; then no imagination can make the beloved face seem more beautiful, but each day it will be a new joy discovered, for as the face is the mirror of the soul, if two souls have really found each other, the mirror must always rejoice the soul which loves it.

Lucie and Reinhard argued on, she parrying his thought or escaping from it by attacking him with sarcasm after the manner of women in argument. They fell to discussing whether it is possible for a man to marry and be happy with a woman of a lower grade of society than himself. Reinhard said: "Yes, so long as the woman remains simply what she was, but if she is artficed into a sham fine lady, the happiness will inevitably be destroyed." Lucie exclaimed that he was defeating his own argument, had he not rejected the barrier of social disparity as a thing not affecting the soul? He answered that it is not social disparity which works the evil, but the falsifying of mentality by making a kitchenmaid into a fine lady which is disastrous. He added that he had known a case like this and, of course, Lucie ordered him to tell the story at once. Thus we are brought to the novelle "Regine," given in the setting of the peaceful country-house room, with the maids at their spinning wheels and Lucie sitting in a high-backed chair, while Reinhard related the story:

"Erwin Altenauer, the son of wealthy American parents, was a secretary at the American Legation in a German capital, but the work was evidently scarcely arduous, for Erwin resided in a university city near-by. He had hired a comfortable lodging and was enjoying himself with the students, when Fate, in the shape of a servant girl, came into his life. He noticed her beauty and graceful carriage when she was working about the house, noted too the scrupulous neatness of her threadbare gown, and once, as he passed her while she was scrubbing the stairs, his eyes met hers and the frankness of her

gaze, and something sorrowful and gentle in her expression, struck him so much, that he stopped and asked her name. She answered: "Regine," and went on with her work.

One night he returned home late. As he reached the usually quiet street where he lived, he was surprised by hearing boisterous laughter and by seeing a gang of students collected before his house. On the steps stood a tall young woman, her back against the door. She was holding on to the knocker with one hand, while she defended herself as best she could from the drunken advances of the young brutes who were besieging her. One after the other they tried to kiss the frightened girl, but, unsteady on their feet, they were each in turn thrown back by the woman's strong arm, and staggered down the steps amid roars of laughter. As Erwin saw her push past her tormentors and make for the street. She was met by a volley of drunken merriment and several students barred her way shouting: "Don't let the lioness escape! Give us a kiss!" and such-like delightful invitations, which the callow male deems so tempting to womankind. Erwin by this time had recognised Regine. He shouldered his way through the crowd of students, unlocked the door and catching hold of Regine, who had been driven back on to the steps, he drew her quickly into the house and shut the door in her assailants' faces. It happened so unexpectedly that the drunken crew was nonplussed and after emitting various catcalls and banging on the door, the students staggered off, singing and yowling.

Regine told Erwin breathlessly that she had been granted a holiday to visit her home some few hours' walk distant, and having missed the diligence, she had been forced to trudge all the way back. When she had reached the house she had found her employers were out for the evening and the door closed. She had rung the bell and knocked vainly and then she had set herself to wait for her master and mistress's return, and the drunken students had come along. She thanked Erwin for rescuing her, then, with the face of a saint and the step of a queen, she mounted the stairs to her attic-room.

From that day Regine was often in Erwin's thoughts, the mixture of dignity and humility, and the girl's beauty

haunted him. One afternoon he passed her at the foot of the stairs as she was speaking to a tall soldier. Erwin thought that she blushed when she saw him. This occupied his mind a good deal and yet he told himself it was no business of his if the servant-girl had a lover.

That evening he returned home earlier than usual and, when he was going up to his room, he came upon Regine standing on the landing, a sheet of soiled note-paper in her hand. She had dropped it on the floor and she was now examining it in distress. Erwin asked her what was amiss and she replied that, having to write a letter, she had begged some paper from her mistress and now it was soiled and she had no more. Erwin took her into his room and gave her a clean sheet of paper. He asked her if she had ink and a pen and she said that she had a little ink and a scratchy old pen. The end of it was that she wrote her letter in Erwin's room. Once he interrupted her by asking if the soldier was her lover. She blushed deeply, but a smile of amusement touched her lips as she answered: "That was my brother, Sir."

He watched her as she wrote, the lamp-light falling upon her thick glossy hair coiled round her small head. When she had finished and Erwin had sealed the letter for her, she moved to the door, but he detained her, questioning her about her home. She told him that her parents were very poor, her father was lame from an accident, her mother was strong and healthy, but sorely tried by a family of eight; two sons were soldiers, a third was a farm labourer, all the daughters were servants. Yes, she replied to his question as to whether they were all tall and strong as she, but they did not earn such good wages and so she had to give most of what she had to help the parents. Her brother had come that afternoon to tell her their father had to pay an old debt and, as the others could not help, she must send the money. Well, she could do so next week, but they must wait till then. She added that she had meant to have bought herself a woollen dress with this money, but she could do without it.

As she talked, Erwin remarked the melodious tone of her voice and he listened dreamily. Of course he could have given

her the sum, it was small enough indeed, but he feared to offend her or lessen her confidence in him.

When at last he let her bid him good-night and she opened his door, she drew back affrighted for there were voices on the stairs and she realised she would meet the other servants going up to bed. Both knew that it would spell ruin for her to be seen leaving his room at night. They waited till the footsteps had passed, and their eyes told each other there was something delightful in sharing even so harmless and unimportant a secret.

From that day onward Erwin often called Regine into his room of an evening, and gradually it became a habit for her to slip in and talk with him for an hour on her way up to her attic, but there was never a word of love, no touch nor kiss. One evening she picked up an American newspaper which was lying on his table. He told her it was English and said tentatively: "Would you like to learn English? Then you could go to America and marry a rich man." She blushed, but answered steadily: "I should like to learn English well enough and perhaps someday I might go to America and find better paid work."

Impulsively Erwin took the paper from her: "Regine, I can wait no longer" he said, "will you marry me and come to America with me?" She started back —

"Now its all over," she said brokenly; "all over and I was so happy."

Erwin tried to make her understand that he loved her, but she shook her head, buried her face in her hands and wept.

"Oh! it was not right of me!" she said, "but these hours with you made me so happy! I only wanted to be with you, nothing more, oh! Sir, really nothing more! And now it is all over and I must go."

She got up and, without bidding him good-night, she fled from the room. Erwin sat for hours puzzling why she would not believe in him. Did she think it impossible that a rich man could mean honourably? Had she not told him everything about her family? Was it worse than he knew?

The next morning when he asked to speak with Regine he

was told she had disappeared. He inquired the name of her village and set out to seek her. He found the family in very poor circumstances and the father's surprise was unbounded when the gentleman, who had driven up in a calèche and pair, demanded Regine's hand in marriage. Erwin gave the family a sum which was small for him, but for them seemed untold riches, then he drove off with Regine. He took her to some kindly people in another town and left her with them for six months, had her given lessons in German and English, let her rest her hard-worked body and tend her toil-stained hands, began to make a fine lady of her, you see! Then this methodical lover returned, the marriage took place, and once more he drove away with Regine in his calèche.

Reinhard paused: "The rest of the story fits your theory that such marriages end in disaster," he said smiling, "but my contention is that it is the falsifying of a simple woman into a half educated lady which works the havoc! I had best end the story with Erwin's marriage!"

Lucie however was not to be put off and so Reinhard resumed: "About a year and a half later I was living in the capital and one day I met Erwin of whom I had lost sight. He was working as secretary at the American Legation and had not returned to the town, whence he had so suddenly disappeared. His departure had caused no comment, as it had always been known he would be obliged to return to his diplomatic work some day, and nobody had connected his disappearance with the servant-maid Regine, who had left her situation without warning.

Erwin told me he was married and invited me to his house. I found his wife a singularly beautiful woman. She spoke English fluently and a little French, was quiet and gentle in manner and only a certain shyness might have betrayed that she was unaccustomed to society. I should never have recognised Regine, in fact having only seen her once I had no recollection of her features. At first Erwin said nothing about his wife's origin, but when it was mentioned that I was a native of K. I saw husband and wife exchange glances. Whether Erwin feared I might recognise her, or whether he felt the need

of a confidant, I do not know, but before I left the house, he told me the story. He said he had travelled with her to London and Paris, educating her carefully in art and music, but always taking care not to appear to her as a task-master. His chief difficulty had been to prevent her assisting in the house-work of the hotels where they had stayed. They were absolutely happy and he had not regretted his choice.

After this I went constantly to his house. One day I found them much agitated, as news had come which necessitated Erwin's immediate return to America. He had decided to go without Regine as he wished her to have a year more to complete her education as a lady. I think his vanity had prevented him from informing his family out of which walk in life he had chosen his wife, and he hoped to perfect her in all ways before presenting her to his relations. She implored him, with tears in her eyes, to take her with him, but he was obdurate. He told her that her three lady friends would take care of her, and that his absence would only last a few months. He begged me to visit her often. The next day he sailed for America.

From the first I distrusted the three ladies to whose especial care Erwin had recommended his wife, but it was only later that I heard they were nicknamed the "Three Fates" because they were said to have cut the thread of every destiny which they had touched. They were outwardly respectable, middle-aged matrons, wives of government officials who, probably glad to be left in peace, permitted them full liberty to indulge in their intellectual pursuits, for these ladies considered themselves highly intellectual and artistic and attended every concert, lecture and picture exhibition. In their train was an emancipated female painter who dressed her lanky body in as masculine garments as possible, had her skirt cut with side pockets in which she invariably buried her hands, wore a shabby black felt hat on her scraped-back hair, swaggered and slapped her thigh when she laughed as she imagined a male art-student would have done. She painted mediocre portraits which the "Three Fates" vowed were masterpieces.

I saw Regine frequently, but after a few weeks she was nearly always out when I called and her housekeeper informed

me she was much taken up with her three lady friends. I thought she was probably happy enough and gradually I discontinued my visits.

One day at a picture gallery I was astonished by coming across a badly painted picture of Regine in an theatrical pose, her hair flowing on her shoulders and a scarlet cloak draped round her. It was a "study" by the emancipated female dauber and I was told it had been purchased by an American art dealer. The whole thing did not please me, I confess, and I wondered if I ought to write to Erwin, but I reflected that the 'Three Fates' were respectable women and that the picture had probably been painted under their auspices. It was doubtless only a foolish idea of mine, but somehow I felt anxious about Regine.

Then I saw her at the theatre in a box with her friends, many young men paid her their respects during the evening. I noticed she looked melancholy, but I recollected that Erwin had expressly desired she should take part in social gatherings and her depression was very likely caused by the timidity in society which I had previously remarked. One day Regine sent me a note asking me to be her cavalier at an alfresco party. It was to last a whole day and she said she felt she would like to have a friend of Erwin's to take care of her. I accepted and one summer morning I drove off with her in a carriage I had hired. When we reached the meeting place we found that the 'Three Fates' had decreed that the female painter was to drive in my carriage. I could not refuse and the ugly creature was soon lolling beside Regine on the front seat. Although it was a hot day and the other ladies were dressed in light summer-gowns, the painter was as black as a crow in a cloth coat cut to resemble a man's, a heavy skirt and a black straw hat. She drew an apple out of her pocket and gnawed at it. She was so unappetising, that I felt irritated and made up my mind to annoy her. I began expatiating on women painters and writers of the past and especially on Angelica Kaufmann. I praised her portrait of herself, saying how deliciously feminine she had contrived to remain in spite of the hard work she had accomplished. This had the desired effect upon the ungainly

female, she munched another apple in silence and, when we pulled up to rest the horses, she got out of the carriage and left us. But we had counted without the 'Three Fates,' no sooner was she out of the carriage, than one of them appeared with a good-looking, swarthy man, presented him to Regine as a secretary of the Brazilian Legation and commanded him to take a seat in my carriage. He was civil enough, but his undisguised admiration of Regine jarred on me. We reached our destination, a pretty little country inn, and Regine made me sit beside her during dinner. After we rose from table, the Brazilian, noticing that she answered him coldly if politely, withdrew and left us undisturbed. Regine took my arm and we walked away together. We found a bench and sat down. She spoke of Erwin, asking eager questions about him, then suddenly she began to cry. She told me, through her tears, that she doubted if her happiness would last, but when I asked her why, she shook her head and would give me no answer. After a time she dried her eyes and said we must return to the other guests.

While we were drinking coffee before starting on our homeward way I was surprised to see that her coldness to the Brazilian had vanished and she now laughed and talked with him, and later even walked about the hostelry garden with her arm thro' his. On the way home the Brazilian was again told to drive in my carriage. Regine was so silent that we both thought she was asleep. When we reached the town she said good-night to us with amiable indifference. I went with the Brazilian to a restaurant and had supper with him, then he left me, saying he was tired and was going to bed.

The next morning I went to Regine. To my surprise the housekeeper, who answered the bell, looked at me with a hostile glance, and when I asked after Regine she shook her head dubiously and pointed at the drawing-room door. I knocked and entered. Regine was sitting near the window, her face was deadly pale, there were blue lines beneath her eyes and her usually frank and open gaze seemed to have grown wavering and uncertain. I asked her how she felt and she answered with a faint smile: "I am not very well to-day, my

head aches unbearably." More I could not get her to say about herself and after a few minutes desultory and unsatisfactory conversation I took my leave, perplexed and anxious. About an hour later the housekeeper came to my door and asked to speak to me. She came in, put her market-basket down beside her, and sitting very upright on the chair I had pushed forward for her, she told me she had come to me as she knew I was Erwin's friend. She said that the preceding night she had been wakened towards midnight by someone moving about the house, she had got up and peered through her door, but as all had been silent, she had thought she had been mistaken, had gone back to bed and had soon fallen asleep. At two in the morning she had wakened again and this time she was sure she heard steps and whispering on the stairs. Once more she had got up and looked out. She saw Regine going down the stairs with a lighted lamp in her hand. A tall man was following her. Regine let him out of the front door, then stealthily slipped upstairs. The servant saw she was in her night-gown.

In the morning the housekeeper found that two chairs had been drawn up to the dining-room table and there were crumbs scattered on the floor. She examined the cupboards and found that a decanter, which had been full of white wine the evening before, had been drained to the dregs, and the bread-basket, where she had left a number of rolls, was empty. Also there were marks of dusty boots on the carpet.

The woman was distressed and begged me to write to Erwin immediately. I told her the wisest thing she could do was to hold her tongue, in fact I made her promise neither to write to Erwin nor to confide in any one. I was perplexed, for I remembered how lovingly Regine had spoken of Erwin, but I recollected her remark that her married happiness would not last, I recalled her sudden change of manner to the Brazilian and how she had walked in the garden with him. Then it struck me he had seemed in a hurry to leave me after supper. But would he have eaten several rolls and drunk a bottle of wine almost directly afterwards?

I was troubled and suspicious and I decided to seek out

the Brazilian and see whether he was nervous or guilty in manner. I met him as I was on the way to his Legation. He was walking with some other men, laughing and talking. He greeted me amiably, bowed and smiled and looked me frankly in the eyes.

A few evenings later I saw Regine again at the theatre with the "Three Fates," and the Brazilian was sitting beside her. I shrugged my shoulders and settled that Erwin must look after his own wife, it was not my business, but I wished he would come home! I felt sorry for Regine, inexperienced and simple-minded as she was and left alone for now over eight months.

Shortly after this I heard Erwin had returned and that he and his wife had sailed immediately for America.

Some years afterwards I met Erwin again and he told me the rest of the miserable story. He had seen that unlucky picture of Regine in an auctioneer's shop in New York. It had been unpleasant to him, for there was something meretricious in the pose and expression, but remembering that Regine had written that her three friends had persuaded her to sit for a talented woman painter, he had crushed down the uneasy feeling, had purchased the picture and sent it to his home in Boston. A few days later he had sailed for Europe. He reached his house in our capital in the early morning. He had not announced his arrival as he wished to give his wife a pleasant surprise. He found the house-door open, for the servant-girl was gossiping with the milkman down the street, so he entered and ran upstairs to Regine's apartments. The sitting room was empty. He noticed a plaster cast of the *Vénus de Milo* and he remembered Regine had written him the "Three Fates" had given it to her. He went to the door of Regine's bedroom, it was ajar and he looked in. Regine was standing before the mirror, her body was bared to the hips whence a drapery of ivory coloured brocade fell to the ground in ample folds, her arms were lifted as she was coiling her hair round her head. It was as if the *Vénus de Milo* had come to life. But Erwin caught a glimpse in the mirror of Regine's expression, it was utterly sorrowful, the face of a

woman in great trouble. He called her and she turned to him. Joy and surprise chased the misery from her face and, for an hour, they were absolutely happy. Then he asked her why he had found her in such an unusual costume, and she told him that her artistic friends had left her no peace until she had consented to sit for the female painter, so she had been practising the pose before the mirror. The picture was to be for him she said, but up to date the painter had only made a small study for it. Erwin asked her what had become of this study and she said the painter had it.

The first two days of Erwin's return passed peacefully, yet he was disturbed by something he could not understand in Regine's manner. She was tender and loving as ever, but there was an unaccountable melancholy in her eyes and she seemed nervous and timid.

Diplomatic business took Erwin to the Brazilian Legation. The minister was absent and the secretary was at his lodgings, as he was unwell. Erwin went to the secretary's house and was received very civilly. The Brazilian said he had had the pleasure of meeting Madame Regine once or twice and asked after her eagerly. As Erwin was leaving he caught sight of a small picture lying on a table near the door. He recognised the brocade with which he had seen Regine draping her limbs two days since, and, with a shock that made his heart stand still, he saw that it was Regine, Regine bared to the waist and in the pose in which he had surprised her. The artist had painted some other model's face, but the young body, the heavy hair, the hands were Regine's. For a moment Erwin stood looking at the sketch in silence, then turning to the Brazilian he said calmly: "That is a pretty little painting!" The Brazilian answered without embarrassment: "Yes, I bought it in a studio here, it is a study from nature, I believe." There was no hint of nervousness in the man's manner, no trace of guilt.

Erwin took his leave, shaking the Brazilian's hand cordially, tho' he felt as if he were drowning in a sea of bitterness, but his instinct was to betray nothing to this man, who might be his deadliest enemy. He must make sure, before he struck him down!

For hours Erwin walked along the dusty roads near the town, the midday sun beat down upon him mercilessly, but he felt nothing of it, his whole being was intent on the arraignment, of his own soul, and on an impassioned pleading for Regine against himself, a struggle to unravel the thread of events, to piece together a story of which he knew no facts. At last his line of action was clear to him: he would say nothing, he would take Regine away, now at once—put the ocean between her and this sordid misery—and she would explain, she would tell him—some-day!

Meanwhile Regine had been tortured by her thoughts. It had suddenly come to her that the missing picture was a danger to her, why and how she did not know, but as if some echo from Erwin's agony had touched her mind, she was aware of an imperative urgency to find the picture. She went to the studio and besought the painter to give her the study, to sell it her, to lend it to her — anything — but she must have it! The painter prevaricated at first, promised to send it, but finally she owned she had not got it and pretended one of the "Fates" had it. Regine hastened to these ladies, but, though they probably knew well enough where the picture was, they denied all knowledge of it.

With a weight of foreboding on her heart Regine returned to her house empty-handed. She found Erwin who had just arrived from his sun-baked walk thro' the purlieus of the city.

He greeted Regine with a pitiful attempt at affectionate nonchalance, saying he was arranging for their departure as he had decided to sail for America as soon as possible. She answered only by a sigh of relief. His eyes questioned her, but she gave no sign of comprehension. She who only knew that the waves of destiny were sweeping in upon her. What did she know, poor untutored peasant girl, of how to deal with Erwin's unspoken condemnation of her? And her silence, her sigh of relief wrote an added clause in the document of his indictment of her.

The next day they left Europe.

"The housekeeper came to me," Reinhard continued, "and confessed she had thought it her duty to inform Erwin

that a man had been with Regine during the night. "I told him it had only been one man and that she had seen him but once alone at night," she said, "and Herr Erwin put my mind at rest for he answered that it was all right, the man had been a messenger from him." Like many a fool before, she had done the cruellest thing on earth, but she had thought it her duty.

I heard no more of Erwin and Regine for some years. The last of the story which then came to my knowledge then was that one day, as I was passing their house, I met two workmen pushing a barrow on which the plaster *Vénus de Milo* swayed aslant in perilous poise. A goddess dethroned! She seemed to me a symbol of the beauty of life dragged away by misunderstanding. I dubbed myself an imaginative fool and went my ways, forgetting Regine for the time.

As I have said I met Erwin some years after and he told me the rest. Their voyage had been outwardly uneventful, Regine and he had appeared as a rather silent but completely amicable couple. Silent they were indeed, alas! for it! She said no word of explanation, he asked her no question and as the ship swept forward putting the ocean between her and Europe, so had the waves of destiny rolled on between Regine and Erwin, inexorably widening the distance between their souls.

When they reached his home he installed her in comfortable rooms in a wing of his father's house. The reception by the family was kindly, but Erwin's coolness, his treatment of Regine as a being under a cloud of suspicion, subconsciously influenced everyone. Regine's timidity, her attitude of self-effacement had instantly established a barrier to ordinary straightforward intercourse. She shrank back into her apartments, even her meals were brought to her there. No one wished to treat her as a pariah, there was no tangible reason why they should, but she was accepted as a recluse, as one whose mortal ailment shut her off from normal life. Yet no one paused to inquire what ailed this young and beautiful woman, she was a foreigner and foreigners have queer ways. The facile acceptance of alien habits established the fact of Regine's seclusion and it was scarcely remarked.

Only Erwin's mother knew as much of his story as he knew himself. She wept a little, hated Regine for an hour and then, as she was an unimaginative, kindly woman she calmly assumed that all would come right in time and set herself to wait for this excellent and inevitable conclusion.

Erwin, having seen that Regine's creature comforts were supplied, pleaded business in another city and went off to fight the demons of suspicion and jealousy which were wrecking his soul, manlike forgetting the agony in Regine's, but that was as it should be, as she was probably guilty towards him, and the guilty have no rights, as we know.

Some three weeks later Erwin returned. He had made up his mind to forgive and forget—after an explanation which he meant to demand from Regine. Again his impatience to see the woman he loved in spite of everything—he rather admired himself for this, confusing desire with love after the manner of even the best of men—again his impatience caused him to take the night-train and race back unannounced. He arrived in the early morning. The family was still asleep and he slipped into the house and went to his room—the room of his boyhood—to wash and dress. His mother heard him however and came to him. The kindly woman told him how she had often taken her sewing across to the little sitting room in the side-wing, how she had kept Regine company as much as she could, but that the poor girl, though she had responded with evident gratitude to her friendliness, had never relaxed her timid reticence. She said that Regine's beauty and something unutterably pure and gentle in her being had won her heart, and she told Erwin that considering how he had left this inexperienced girl alone and undefended, he ought to make allowances if she had failed in her trust. "Christ Himself forgave the woman who fell," she whispered, her woman's heart speaking out above the jealous soul of a mother.

"Christ forgave," he answered bitterly, "but would he have required a man to live his life with an adulteress?" Hardly had the words left his lips than he knew their injustice, for to judge with so little proof was surely unjust?

His mother told him how the preceding night, she had

got up to look for a book, and had noticed a light burning in Regine's room. She had gone to the window and seen that Regine was kneeling before a chair with a book propped up before her. For a long time the mother had watched her kneeling there. Then she had gone back to bed, her heart full of pity and a little love, for she thought that if Regine had sinned, surely this patient vigil in the silence of the night must cleanse even the soul of a fallen woman, if fallen woman she were.

Without a word Erwin hurried across to the other wing. Regine's sitting-room was empty, everything was scrupulously tidy and he noticed her book of German hymns which she had brought from her village, lying on the table. He went across to the bedroom and opened the door gently. The room was empty, the bed smooth and unslept in. One of the delicate nightgowns which he had given Regine — how long ago it seemed — lay neatly folded on the pillow. He went up to the bed and whispered: "Regine" but no answer came. He turned hastily—perhaps she was standing near him, he thought—but she was not there. Idly he touched the bed curtain and his hand came against something heavy. Almost angrily he pushed against it—could Regine be hiding from him? Then in an agony of fear he tore back the curtain — — Regine was hanging against the bedpost — — dead.

He cut her down in an instant, held her lifeless body against him, kissed her chill lips, called her, implored her—then laid her back on the smooth, white bed in all her still and piteous beauty, which the cord had strangely spared.

She was dressed in the threadbare gown which she had worn years ago when he had first known her as a servant girl. He opened the plain bodice, laid his head on her breast and listened—there was no flutter of life, only a folded paper crackled as his trembling fingers sought her heart. He ran wildly down the stairs and out into the quiet street to the doctor's house some doors distant.

All remedies were tried in vain, Regine was dead. The doctor and Erwin's family, who had hastened to his assistance,

withdrew and left him. Then he took up the letter he had found on Regine's bosom. He saw that it was addressed to him, he broke the seal and read it, kneeling beside that still figure. She told him that she loved him and him alone, but that she was not fit to be his wife, for her family had sunk into worse conditions than ever and she felt that they would make ceaseless demands on his generosity. Her chief anxiety had been her youngest brother, Erwin would remember him as the soldier whom he had once believed to be her lover! The boy had taken to bad ways, had changed his situations constantly and always had grievances against his employers. These grievances had been in his imagination at first, but like all people who think themselves aggrieved, gradually the storms in his own being had called forth injustice from others, and soon he had become an Ishmael with his hand against all men and all men's hands against him.

Just after Erwin had gone to America Regine had heard that a terrible thing had happened to this brother. He had been employed by a horse-dealer, a rough man. He and this master had been taking some horses to a fair, they had quarrelled and the master had lashed him across the face with his whip. The boy was a giant of bodily strength and he had responded by a blow which had killed the master outright. Horror-struck at the result of his violence he had galloped away, had sold the horse he rode at the nearest town and had wandered through the country, a terrified, guilt-stricken Ishmael. A newspaper had come into his possession where the crime was described, with the added detail that the murdered man had been robbed of a considerable sum of money. The boy had not been the thief, some passer-by had robbed the corpse, but it had seemed to him that this accusation degraded him to the level of the lowest amongst criminals, and in his despair he had tramped to the capital and sought out Regine, the sister who had always comforted him. He had sent her word that he would come to her secretly at night. She had found his letter when she returned from the alfresco feast and that night she had let him in, had fed him with what she could find without

waking the housekeeper who had the key of the larder, had given him what money she had, had done her best to comfort him. But from that hour her mind had been deeply troubled, how could she, the sister of a murderer, be a fitting mate for Erwin— a gentleman, an honest man? She felt she was branded. Then she had read in a newspaper that her brother had been arrested and convicted. A few weeks after she had read that he had been hung. Then had come the story of her semi-nude picture, and she had suspected that the "Three Fates" and the painter had sold it to the Brazilian into whose arms they had tried to lure her by romantic accounts of his passion for her. She felt that she was smirched. Her only thought had been to keep silence, to hide everything from Erwin, her lord, her master, her teacher, her beloved. And then she realised that she was a burden to him, that she was an obstacle to his happiness with his family. She was only a servant-girl after all and she asked him to bury her in the clothes she had earned honestly. She had been a mistake all through and she bade him forget and forgive her."

There was a long silence when Reinhard finished, then Lucie said gravely: "It was the fault of Erwin's wretched vanity. The woman had something heroic in her, but she was right when she said she was a mistake. Good-night, I shall dream of Regine — poor puzzled soul."

CHAPTER X.

The Poor Baroness. A ghost Story.

Reinhard slept soundly that night and when he woke the country-side was bathed in summer sunshine. He heard voics and laueghter under his window and looking out he saw that breakfast was being prepared beneath the trees in the garden. Then he heard some one calling: "Lux my light! are you there?" and he saw how a tall old man, leaning on a stick, was limping up to the table and that Mistress Lucie was coming towards him. So the uncle, called her "Lux, his light" instead of Lucie! Reinhard smiled as he dressed. "Lux!" The name pleased him.

The Colonel greeted Reinhard affably when he appeared at breakfast, and enquired if he was the son of Professor Reinhard who lived in X. and when Reinhard said yes, he asked if the Professor and his wife had never spoken of him? At first Reinhard could not remember, but after a time he recalled having heard his mother speak of a Lieutenant of that name. "Yes, I was young when I knew your parents," said the old man with a whimsical smile.

It was very pleasant breakfasting beneath the plane trees and both Lux and her uncle made Reinhard welcome. They talked of many things and the sorrowful story of Regine was not mentioned until the Colonel abruptly asked Reinhard if he knew any more marriage-histories. Reinhard thought a moment and then replied that he knew a story of a marriage which had come about out of sheer pity. Of course he was asked to tell it and, when the breakfast was cleared away, he told them the story of the "Poor Baroness," while the gentle breeze rustled the leaves of the plane trees and brought the fragrance of roses from the garden:

“Brandolf, a young lawyer, was going to visit some friends who lived on the second floor of a house of flats. The staircase was dark and as he ran up the steps he collided with a woman who was cleaning knives on the first floor landing. He muttered an apology, but as he went on he noticed something strike the heel of his boot and, looking down through the banisters, he saw the woman gazing up at him with such fury in her eyes that he paused, but fearing a disagreeable altercation he made no remark and went on to his friends’ apartment. He found that the woman had really jabbed at his boot with a knife, making a deep scratch on the leather. He told his friends his adventure, adding: “It’s my own snobbish fault, if I had found a lady in silks and satins sitting on the stairs, I should have been more courteous, but as it was only a servant-girl I nearly knocked her over and hardly apologized! It serves me right to have got my boot spoiled!” They laughed at him, telling him that he was wrong for the servant-girl was really a Baroness Hedwig Lohausen, who out of avarice lived and dressed like a tramp, and cleaned her knives and boots on the landing, probably to annoy her neighbours; and yet was so haughty that she would not condescend to make their acquaintance, because their names were not in the Gotha! She let her front rooms, but though she had only been in the house a few months she had already quarrelled with several lodgers, who after a couple of days had departed, furious at her bill and her pretensions. She made absurd conditions: her lodgers were not allowed to smoke; not permitted to open the windows, save at stated hours; enjoined not to lie on the sofa; requested to remove their boots if they were dusty or muddy! As she kept no servant and did the house-work herself, they found they were constantly under her watchful eye, and each lodger had departed as quickly as possible. No one knew the Baroness’s story, she had no friends and received no visitors. If people spoke to her she scarcely answered, only flung them an unsmiling look. Her stratagem was evidently to harry her lodgers so that they were glad to escape, even at the price of paying compensation for a broken contract. She was a miser and a shrew.

All this aroused Brandolf's curiosity so much that he thought he would hire the miser's rooms some-day. It was his hobby to study the repellent people of the world and he felt he would like to see for himself what sort of a devil this woman was. Sometime after he again visited his friends on the floor above the miser's dwelling. He found the family on the point of starting for Italy for the winter. He hung about watching their departure, then, when they had driven away, he remembered the Baroness and his plan of hiring a lodging in her house. He rang at her door and when she appeared said he wished to see the rooms. She looked him up and down without speaking, and there was something so defiant in her glance that he expected her to bang the door in his face, but she said frigidly that he could see the apartments if he wished. The rooms were like an antiquary's shop: beautiful old chairs and tables, inlaid wardrobes, carved oaken sideboards, tapestries and oriental carpets, a wealth of pictures, engravings and old china. On most of the furniture there were the same armorial bearings. Brandolf hired the rooms, accepting the conditions which the Baroness imposed. He began to understand her anxiety now that he had seen the valuable furniture and the scrupulous cleanliness with which the rooms were kept. If she did all the house-work unaided, it was comprehensible that she wished to avoid dust and dirt. But why did she live so poorly, when she was the owner of such treasures?

Brandolf was absent in the daytime. His rooms were kept in perfect order, his breakfast was served punctually and he seldom caught sight of his landlady. As he was not a smoker he did not offend the tyrant in this, and after a few days he wondered why other lodgers had fallen foul of her. At last he decided to tempt the fury. He bought a pipe and some rank tobacco, and that afternoon he returned home early and started smoking, but he disliked the taste so intensely that he desisted after a few puffs. Then it struck him that he might draw the lioness by opening the windows and the door and letting a thorough draught, scented with pipe smoke, into the house. He did so and after a moment his

landlady appeared. She said sharply that there was a stable in the neighbourhood and that the smell would get into the rooms. Brandolf closed the window and his landlady retired. He leaned back in his chair reflecting upon his failure in raising the storm he had hoped to see, then he rang the bell. She answered it promptly and he asked her to send a parcel for him to his tailor. He thought that she flushed, but her face was half hidden by a sort of turbaned head-dress which was fastened beneath her chin. He repeated his question concerning the parcel. She asked if it was urgent, as she had no one to send, but she could go herself later. He pretended impatience, saying it was urgent as he must have a button sewn on his coat before supper. She asked whether she could not do it for him. He said: "Oh! certainly, but I could not demand such a thing from you." "But you could ask me to run an errand for you?" she said sarcastically, yet he thought he detected a hint of amusement in her voice. As she sat sewing on the button he was able to see more of her face than ever before. It was pale and thin, the mouth firm and the chin finely modelled. It was like some nun's face under its curious coif, like an old picture, he thought. His interest was more than ever aroused. He had discovered that the flat consisted of his three rooms; a door, always closed, shut off the kitchen premises and he supposed the Baroness lived and slept in the kitchen. There never seemed to be a fire in the kitchen and Brandolf never smelled the odour of cooking. Then it struck him that the miser was starving herself. He watched her narrowly as she removed his breakfast tray. He seldom ate the two rolls served him, and he thought her eyes looked hungrily at the spare roll. Good God! did she exist on a roll a day—and the drop of milk he left in the jug? He pretended he needed more for breakfast, ordered eggs and ham. For several days his landlady made no remark, then she came to him and said that, as he never ate all that he ordered, it would be best to countermand the food. She had seen through his ruse!

One morning he found her at the house-door talking to a woman with a barrow-full of vegetables and flowers. She

held a pot of crimson carnations in her hand and he saw her bury her pale face in the flowers and heard her ask the price of the plant. She shook her head, handed the carnations back to the market-woman and returned into the house. Brandolf bought the plant and ran upstairs, hoping to catch her up and offer her the flowers, but she had vanished into the kitchen and he dared not follow. He put the flower-pot on his table and went out. He returned towards evening, opened the door with his latchkey and went quietly into his room. The Baroness was sitting in his chair near the table with the carnations. She was asleep and did not waken as he came up to her. He stood looking at her pale face and saw that it bore not expression of ill-humour, but a look of hopeless sadness, and he noticed that tears lingered on the long eyelashes which lay in the white cheek. A wave of pity surged through Brandolf, a quixotic yearning to help this unhappy being who seemed so sunk in avarice. Or was she so poor that her parsimony was simply a brave struggle with the world?

With a sigh, that was half a sob, the Baroness woke and, seeing her lodger standing near her with a kindly look on his face, she sprang up excusing herself for her intrusion. She said hastily that carnations were her favorite flowers, and that she had once had a garden which she had loved. He answered gently that he had bought the plant for her and it would be a pleasure to him if she would accept it. A flush spread over her face and her eyes grew hard.

"There is too little light in my rooms for plants," she said harshly, "they are better here." She turned haughtily away and left the room without thanking him for his offer. For some days he saw no more of her, then she appeared with his bill. He purposely did not look at the items, but paid the bill without comment. It was not exorbitant. As he handed her the money he was struck by the mixture of anxiety and defiance in her face.

That day a smell of cooking came from the kitchen. Did the miser eat a square meal once a month when her bill was paid? Or would she eat regularly now that she was assured her lodger meant to stay on?

The next day there was no smell of cooking and Brandolf sighed, thinking of the half-starved miser, yet was she really a miser or was she terribly poor? And if so why did she not sell some of her valuable furniture and eat like a rational being?

It was a hard winter and Brandolf often thought of the woman who lived in that fireless kitchen, for he guessed that she never lit the stove as no smoke came from the chimney. Only his rooms were warmed. Oh the fool! Why did she not steal some of his coal? Brandolf was wealthy and he wished the Baroness, be she a pauper or miser, would rob him sufficiently to have a fire in that merciless cold.

One bitter morning his breakfast was not ready. He waited, then rang the bell. After sometime he went down the passage and called his landlady. He made bold to rap at the kitchen door, but as there was no answer, he opened it and called again. Then he heard a low moaning coming from, a room beyond the kitchen. He went on and knocked softly at the inner door. The kitchen was ice cold, dark and inexpressibly dreary. He waited a moment, then as the only answer to his knock was that piteous moaning, he opened the door and went in. It was a slip of a room, with bare walls and a narrow window looking out on a dismal courtyard. The furniture consisted of a chair, a table with a jug and basin and a miserable truckle-bed on which the Baroness lay, covered by a worn-out blanket. Her eyes were wide open, her brown hair lay massed on the pillow, the thin face was flushed with fever. He saw that the emaciated limbs beneath the wretched blanket were trembling violently. When he approached she turned her eyes towards him, but her gaze was wild and she did not recognise him. She was moaning and muttering like one bereft of reason.

Brandolf hastened for a doctor. The poor soul was moved into a good bed in one of the well-warmed front rooms and a nurse was called in.

For days the miser hovered between life and death, hunger and cold had done their work well, but gradually the fever abated and she regained consciousness. Then one morning

the nurse told Brandolf he could visit the invalid. She had been too weak to speak much up to then, and her dazed eyes had rested upon her beautiful furniture as if she had been trying to understand where she was and why she lay there, tended and nursed carefully. Some days ago she had questioned the doctor, who had impressed her with the necessity of waiting till she was well before hearing how and why things were thus, and, with the apathy of physical weakness, she had submitted.

Brandolf was surprised to see the beauty and distinction of the woman he had taken for a slatternly servant-girl when she had stabbed his boot that day in the staircase! Now her face was etherealised by illness and her thick nut-brown hair in two heavy plaits framing her face enhanced her beauty. Her fragile hands lying on the white coverlet were like the petals of a flower.

"You made a bad bargain when you took a lodging in my house!" she said tremulously.

"On the contrary I made a good bargain!" he answered, "at least it will be so if you let us nurse you back to health and strength!" She smiled, but the smile changed to a piteous trembling of the lips and her eyes filled with tears. He saw how weak she still was and, after pressing her hand kindly and gently, he went away. The next day he paid her another visit and brought her a few hothouse roses. She took them and held them in her hand, while a little colour crept into her face and this time a smile played round her lips. It was as though a statue had come to life and Brandolf remembered an old saying: "How canst thou make a white lily into a red, red rose? Kiss a white Galathea and she will laugh and blush" —but—he thought alas! the kiss was missing in this case.

He saw her every day after this, brought her flowers and fruit, and then one morning he found her sitting propped up in an arm-chair. She gave him her hand and said shyly: "When I struck at your boot with a knife I little thought I should sit and talk with you thus!" He laughed. "I am grateful to that knife-thrust, for it has gained me your

friendship," he said, "and I really took your rooms in order to punish you for it!"

"You have punished me by saving my life," she answered, "and by altering my life too, for I must sell my furniture, which is all I have got left in the world, for only thus can I pay the costs of my illness. Then I must look for a situation as a housekeeper or matron of a school. I must therefore repay your kindness by turning you out of your lodging." He took her hand into his kind, firm grasp: "That just fits in the plan we have made for you," he said, "do you think we are ever going to let you slip back into your loneliness?"

She began to cry softly. "Forgive me," she said, "I am not used to hearing such kind words, and they break my heart!" She tried to smile through her tears.

Then he told her his plan: his father was old and lonely, and he needed a housekeeper, a companion who would read to him, walk with him, play a daughter's part in fact. She answered that she would willingly accept this, but first he must hear who she was and why he had found her in such abject poverty.

Her grandmother had been an heiress, half of whose fortune had been squandered by her husband. The Baroness's mother had followed the grandmother's example and married a scamp of noble family who had continued the ruin, had lived a dissolute life and had died young, after having enriched humanity by begetting two sons and a daughter (the Baroness herself). Both brothers turned out true to type and as mere youths disappeared, leaving the Baroness and her mother alone, but there had remained sufficient money to keep the old home going. Then the mother died and about the same time the Baroness inherited a fortune from a distant relative. The brothers promptly reappeared, pretending they had come to take care of their sister. They brought a friend with them, a Captain Schwendtner. He seemed to be a charming, serious man with a good and restraining influence over the two younger men. He wooed the lonely girl and she married him. Then her martyrdom began, for the whole thing had been a plot, the bridegroom was a former captain, who had

been dismissed the service for gambling and drink. He immediately took the Baroness's fortune out of her keeping, and the brothers disappeared again. Schwendtner too was frequently absent, and when he condescended to be at home he was generally drunk and invariably brutal to his wife. There was one child of the marriage, an ailing little boy. One day Schwendtner arrived home with a drunken crew of friends. The child was very ill and the Baroness sent her husband a message, imploring him to excuse her from presiding at supper. His answer was to storm into the nursery, demanding that his wife and his heir should come down and be presented to his boon companions. She pointed to the sick child who had just fallen into an uneasy sleep. Whereupon the gallant gentleman said he would soon show her how to rear a soldier's son. He drew out a pistol and shot three times across the little one's bed. The child woke screaming in terror. Schwendtner took his wife by the shoulders and forced her to go down to supper. Then he insulted and jeered at her before his guests and, after an orgy of drink, the brute rode off, leaving the Baroness half dazed with shame and misery. That night her child died.

The Baroness sold her jewels and with the proceeds engaged a lawyer who procured her a divorce from Schwendtner. She sold the house and estate, paid the debts which her husband had incurred in her name, and with her furniture, which she had saved from the general ruin, she moved to the town where no one knew her, took the name of Lohausen again and tried to earn her living by letting lodgings. She had clung to the pictures and old furniture, because they were all she had in the world. Yes, she had nearly starved, for she had nothing beyond the lodger's payments wherewith to defray her house-rent.

Brandolf took her hand in his once more: "All that is past and over for ever," he said huskily, "you must begin a new life now."

Soon after this Hedwig Lohausen took up her situation as housekeeper-companion to Brandolf's father, who wrote enthusiastically of her domestic abilities. Each letter was

more glowing than the last, and finally the old man wrote that he had seriously considered the possibility of marrying this delightful woman himself, but, as he noticed that her thoughts were always with his son, he believed it would be wiser to offer him a wife instead of a stepmother! This fell in with the thoughts which had been haunting Brandolf and he realised that pity had led him to his happiness, but he wrote to his father begging him to do the wooing for him, as he feared a refusal too much to risk it himself! But Hedwig Lohausen accepted her former lodger's proposal without hesitation and, one summer day, Brandolf came home and claimed the bride, whom he had saved from death in return for a knife-stab.

The marriage was to take place without delay, but it fell to Brandolf's lot to wreak revenge upon the brutes who had so foully wrecked a woman's life. He had heard that Schwendtner and Hedwig's brothers had gone from drink and gambling to fraud and robbery; all three had been in jail and now they were card-sharpers and vagabonds, and, when this trade failed them, they tramped about the country as itinerant musicians, stealing here and there and generally wanted by the police. A few days before his wedding Brandolf came across them by chance. Driving home one wet evening he stopped at a village hostelry to sup. There were three musicians making horrible sounds in the courtyard, and Brandolf remarked to the innkeeper that he wondered why he permitted such a noise. The innkeeper answered that the musicians were notorious bad characters, whom it was safest to leave alone, and added that they had formerly been noblemen of standing: two Barons Lohausen and a Captain Schwendtner. Immediately Brandolf conceived a curious plan: for his own satisfaction he would see these brutes humiliated; Hedwig should know nothing of it, but it pleased his phantastic mind. He called his coachman, a shrewd, honest fellow, confided his design, and put the management into his hands. He was to lure the trio to Brandolf's estate and arrange for them to take part in the vintner's mumming which was to conclude the marriage festivities. For the wedding

was to coincide with the traditional annual rejoicings which celebrated the conclusion of the vintage in that neighbourhood.

The coachman arranged it all easily enough, tho' at first the trio had sufficient recollection of their former status to object to being employed as mummers; nevertheless, for five Thalers a head, they consented, their resources being at a low ebb. They were told that there was to be a wedding, but Brandolf's emissary gave them a false name when they inquired who the bride was. He trusted to the fact that everyone shunned the vagabonds and thus they would not discover the trick until too late.

The wedding took place at noon; the guests breakfasted in the house, while the vintners enjoyed a substantial meal in an adjoining field. The afternoon was passed by the gentry in listening to a string-band and by the vintners and peasantry in beer-drinking and feasting. Then, at sunset, the cortege was formed which was to march past the bride and bridegroom as they stood on the steps before the house. Brandolf had devised a novel incident in the time-honoured mumming: surrounded by some twenty peasant lads dressed in green with vine leaf wreaths on their heads, were three devils clad in goat skins, with blackened faces and horns as head-dress. He had ordered these three to be sewn into their costumes and the long tails affixed to their nether parts were fastened together. These devils were the brothers Lohausen and the Ex-Captain. They were instructed to play their musical instruments as loudly as possible when they passed the bridal pair, and told that, while the rest of the cortege represented the healthy pleasures of the vintage, they were to figure as the abuses of good wine. The trio at first demurred when they heard what rôles they were to play, but a promise of further remuneration, together with a good deal of liquor, banished their scruples.

So they were tied to a rope, all three of them, and dragged in mimic bondage by the laughing peasants, guided by Brandolf's coachman. When they reached the steps where Hedwig and Brandolf stood, he slackened the rope so that the musicians, who up to then had been pulled along tail to tail, came to a

sudden standstill. Of course they all three recognised Hedwig, while she could not recognise them in their ludicrous disguise. Three times the miserable men were hauled round the house and, each time the procession halted before the bride and bridegroom, the treacherous brothers and their infamous ally were forced to see their sister and betrayed wife standing smiling and happy beside Brandolf, while they were degraded and ridiculed—for the price of five Thalers.

After the mumming was over the coachman and a number of peasants stood sentry over the three men, so that they could neither escape nor insult the newly married couple. They were consoled however by being plyed with drink. Soon all three were roaring drunk and started a brawl, whereupon two gendarmes appeared on the scene, as if by magic, and arrested them for a theft they had recently committed. It is fair to Brandolf to say that when they came out of jail a few weeks later, they were supplied with tickets to America and a sum of money sufficient to start them in respectable trades.

Hedwig knew nothing of the whole thing until one day, when she was watching the play of her happy, little son of four years old, she confessed to Brandolf that her abiding terror was that the child might fall into the clutches of his disgraceful uncles. Then he told her of the revenge he had inflicted on her betrayers, and when she cried out in protest against the cruel burlesque, he was able to tell her that he had letters from America informing him that all three had settled down into decent citizens: the one was a respectable beer tapster in New York, the other a schoolmaster in Texas, while the third was a preacher in some sober religious community.

Keller was much blamed for the final scene of "Die arme Baronin." Storm wrote him that he could not imagine how he had conceived so crude a burlesque, and every Keller critic has written concerning this scene. Some have sought for a symbolical meaning in it: the three rascals were cured

of their evil habits by seeing themselves as they were in the flashlight of Brandolf's mockery. Others have thought that Keller's idea was didactic: vice punished, virtue triumphant. Surely, with a genius so comprehensive as Gottfried Keller there are many meanings to be extracted from his scenes, meanings which possibly he himself mirrored more than consciously planned. And in the much discussed scenes where his primitive, robust humor is allowed to play unhindered, we can read symbolism into his realism if we will, or take it as the laughter of a god, a Vulcan joking at his anvil. Certainly Heyse was near the truth when he called Keller "the Shakespeare of the Novelle," though far from pleasing Meister Gottfried this tremendous praise annoyed him extremely! There is something Shakespearean in Keller, especially in the boisterous roughness of his burlesque. We remember the ending of the "Three Righteous Combcutters" which resembles in treatment the end of the "Arme Baronin's" story, although in the latter the gruesome touch is lacking. Keller always preferred to give a story a happy ending if he could logically make it so, it was part of his healthy optimism which comes out again and again in his work. This makes him unpalatable to the seekers after sensation, this and his conscientious rejection of the lure of romance. He was romantic as all true poets are romantic—he too loved the "light that never was on land or sea," but his business was with life and the presentment of life, a greater thing than ticked-out sensation or dulcet lyrics in prose form. This explains the fact that Keller is generally more appreciated by the elderly reader, though the young may honestly admire him, yet it requires the maturer minds of those who know life to gauge his relentless veracity and psychological perspicacity.

When Reinhard concluded the marriage-history of the "Arme Baronin" Lucie attacked him telling him that Brandolf thought he had chosen a wife or won her by the generosity of his conduct, whereas, in reality, he had been just as much the toy of circumstance as she, or possibly he had been the puppet of her feminine astuteness. Reinhard and Lucie's strife was caused by her resentment of his tacit assumption

that the man chooses his wife. Lucie argued with such acerbity and the Colonel was surprised at her irritation, manlike failing to see that she was so combative because Reinhard's opinion meant more to her than other men's. To divert the conversation into a peaceable channel, the Colonel proposed to tell an anecdote of his own youth. The project being received with acclamation he cleared his throat and began:

"How quickly one grows old! When one thinks of the past, one feels like the rider in the legend, who galloping through the night looks back and imagines that the mile-stones on the road he has traversed, are grave-stones in a cemetery, so close they seem to be together! Then too we realise all we have missed in our lives and often for what trivial causes! We deferred a visit to a sick friend—he died and we can never say that last word we had in our hearts for him. Instead of sitting quietly at home, as was our habit, we hurried away on some casual errand and missed a visitor who would have changed our destiny. Yes, we see these things, as we look back. The decisive word, the trifling event, was the stone which diverted the current of our life's stream." The Colonel sighed, then after a moment he continued: "I studied law in the University town where you were born, Herr Reinhard. I was a dabbler in all kinds of theories. One day I was a mystic and the next a free-thinker, and so on, but what I really understood was riding, fencing and a good bottle of wine. Yet I was always attracted to studious people and this led me to form a friendship with a young professor. We will call him," the Colonel paused and smiled at Reinhard, "we will call him Mannelin. He bore with my attempts at psychic investigation which were chiefly theorisings on the uncanny tales I heard or read, but he was a professed disbeliever and upheld the cause of reason against my pseudo-mysticism. I was superficial, my thought was not based on study, only on supposition and credulity, but I called myself spiritual minded and thought Mannelin an unimaginative materialist. This did not prevent us from having a real affection for each other and we became close companions. He took me to the house of some acquaintances of his, a banker's family. There

was an only daughter, Hildeburg, who was a considerable heiress and a pretty and charming girl besides. Well, we fell in love with her—Mannelin and I—and she seemed to like us equally. We were often at the banker's house and soon both our hearts were ablaze for Mistress Hildeburg. But a greater blaze interrupted our courting: the city of Moscow went afire and singed the soles of Napoleon's boots! Yes it was a long time ago, Reinhard, the women wore their gowns girdled up beneath their arms and mighty pretty they looked, I can tell you, Sir! When Moscow went afire its glow lit the martial ardour in the souls of the youth of Germany. I got a commission in a Dragoon regiment, Mannelin went into the infantry. The day before we were to leave there was a farewell supper at the banker's house. We were merry in spite of the pain in our hearts, and, laughingly, I asked Hildeburg which she liked best of the two of us."

"That's what I don't know myself," she cried, making a jest of it, tho' I saw her lip quiver, "I like you both so much, you see!"

"It was a June evening—June 1813—how long ago it seems!" The old man paused, while his eyes strayed over the garden aglow in the summer sunshine, "Well," he continued, "well, after supper Hildeburg and her two cavaliers went out on the terrace. And then she told us that she loved us both! If we both came back from the war she would remain our faithful friend, if we both fell she would never marry, but mourn over us to her life's end, if one fell she would marry, the other and think of the slain for ever. Then she kissed us, one after the other, full on the lips and each with equal passion! It was really a confoundedly complicated situation.

When Mannelin and I left the banker's house we went to a tavern, ordered a bottle of wine and solemnly toasted each other; or rather we drank to the health and happiness of the man who returned from the war, and to the peace in death of him who fell in battle. Then we shook our heads, not knowing how to deal with the situation if we both came back! So we said farewell as good friends. The next morning we went on our way.

I heard that Mannelin's regiment had had the luck to be in the thick of the fray from the beginning, while I never smelled powder until the battle of Leipzig. His regiment was in that too, but he and I never met and I only heard he had been wounded. I made inquiries after him, and I was told he had died of his wounds. I'm afraid my inquiries were rather half-hearted, for, upon my honour, I did not know what I hoped to hear, but as time went on and there was no news of him I made up my mind he was dead.

It was May 1814 when I came home with the regiment. The Rhine valley was like one great lilac tree, but springtide and love were at war with perplexity in my heart and I was downcast and uncertain of myself, as I rode out to the country house which Hildeburg's parents had recently purchased and where they now resided. The banker and his lady greeted me warmly, but immediately questioned me concerning Mannelin. As they were speaking, Hildeburg entered the room. I shall never forget her face, it was white as driven snow and the brown eyes were like mountain-tarns, tragic and sombre, although her lips parted in a smile of welcome. The contending emotions in her soul were mirrored in her expression. She believed Mannelin was dead and that I was there to claim her promise. Of course the parents knew nothing of all this and they continued speaking of Mannelin. I went into the garden with Hildeburg and she turned on me with something akin to hatred in her eyes. "It is not true, that my clever gentle friend is lying dead on some battlefield! And you—you have come to tell me—" she exclaimed. I told her I was not sure, but I hoped he was still alive.

"The devil you do!" she cried vehemently, "you hope?" She laughed bitterly. I was silent. Indeed, what could I say? Our pact had been explicit and yet it seemed to me, that she loved Mannelin only, now that he was dead! She heard that I sighed and she turned to me, took my hand and said gently that we would speak of other things. I stayed to supper and she was friendly and simple as in old days. When I bade her good-night she said she hoped to see me often while I was in X.

I was at their house most days, she always seemed glad to see me and my heart was torn between doubt and hope. One afternoon when I rode out, Hildeburg came to meet me with an infantry officer. It was Mannelin. My first feeling was real pleasure at seeing the dear fellow again, my next impulse was jealousy, for Hildeburg's eyes were alight with joy as she cried out: "Now all is well again—and we three are together!" She was so happy, that I felt the only joy in the world lay in the complex situation which made her happy!

We spent some delightful days all three together and then my regiment was ordered to leave X. in a week's time. From the moment I announced this to Hildeburg she was a changed woman. She was moody and gay, silent and irritable by turns. Of course I interpreted this to my advantage. I believed—I dared to hope that she loved me after all, but I decided not to speak to her of my love, she would tell me herself. Yes, we were on curious terms! One of my last evenings I was invited to sup and spend the night. "You won't mind the ghost?" they said laughingly while we were at supper, "the people about here pretend there is one in the side-wing where you are to sleep." You remember that Hildeburg's parents had only recently purchased the house and so the rooms in the side-wing had not been used yet. I said I did not fear ghosts — added I had always wished to see one and asked who this spectre was? Hildeburg said it was by way of being an old woman, a Madame Kratt, a member of the former proprietor's family. "They say she is a horrid hag!" said Hildeburg. I laughed and the matter dropped.

After the ladies had gone to bed, I sat up with the banker and Mannelin drinking punch. It was late when I went up to my room. As I was getting into bed I looked at my watch, it was half past eleven. Ghosts appear at midnight, I thought drowsily, but the punch had been potent and I was very sleepy. So I blew out my candle and fell asleep at once. I had been asleep perhaps half an hour, when I was awakened by a tremendous thud, as of some heavy thing being thrown

violently to the ground. I started up and tried to remember what it was that had wakened me or had I been dreaming? The room was bathed in moonlight. I listened, but as all was still I lay down again. Then I heard something scratching and tapping. The sound came from behind my bed. I was half angry, but my pulses leaped in sudden fear when I felt an icy blast pass over my face. The bed-curtains fluttered; while, to my horror, my blanket was whisked off me. "Good Heavens!" I muttered, "the room is really haunted!" I was wide awake now, I plucked up courage, swung my legs over the edge of the bed and prepared to start on a voyage of investigation. Again that chill breath touched my cheek and the curtains fluttered. I confess I was shuddering with fear. Now I heard dragging footsteps and a thin, trembling voice moaning something which I could not understand. Then in the weird moonlight I saw, not three paces from me, a woman's bent figure. I could see that she wore a large black lace mantilla. She moved forward to a writing-desk which stood near the window, full in the moonlight. I heard her drag her feet as very old people do. Then I saw her pass her pallid hands over the desk, as tho' seeking something. She fumbled at the lock of one of the desk drawers, and I heard the click of a key. She bent over the table, so that for a moment I could not see what she was doing, indeed I was so terrified that I was hardly master of my eyes. The figure moved again and I saw that the hag was searching feverishly thro' the drawers with those cadaverous hands. I saw her take out a packet of papers and detach one from the rest. She bent over the table again, and then I saw she was scratching at this paper with a penknife. Was it some forgotten crime of which I was witnessing the phantom repetition? Perhaps the falsification of some family document of long ago? I heard the ghost laugh — —ugh! it was an eerie, cackling snigger of triumph! Then she laid the paper back in the drawer and the key creaked in the lock. Again she bent over the table hiding it from me. What would she do now? I felt the hair on my head lift, for the bent figure was sidling towards to me—and then in the moonlight the thing turned and I saw its face—. It was the most fiendish

countenance I had ever beheld, white as death, a great hooked nose and a gaping toothless mouth which grinned at me in horrid mockery. Slowly the thing came nearer—— What had I to do with this repulsive ghost? I tried to cry out, to move, to threaten her, but without avail. Steadily, very slowly, the thing came on towards me — — — that murderous face grinning at me. Then I think I must have lost consciousness for a moment, for suddenly the room was empty—only the moonlight lay serenely over all. I heard the clock in the courtyard chime the half hour.

I lay trembling for a few minutes, then I put out my hand cautiously and tried to find the match-box, but it was not there. I leaned down and found my blankets, drew them up and wrapped them round me, over my head too. I listened for a long time, but there was no sound. Once I peeped out of the sheltering blankets. The moon had shifted and the room lay in partial darkness, but there was no sign of that fearsome, old woman—the old Kratt. Of course I had seen the ghost they called Madame Kratt, I said to myself. Gradually I grew calmer and the next thing I knew was that it was morning and the sunshine was pouring into the haunted room. I got up and examined everything; my door was still locked from the inside, the writing desk was quite a harmless, prosaic bit of furniture in the daylight; but what increased my uncanny feeling was that, though I searched through the drawers, there was no packet of papers and no penknife, and I had distinctly seen the ghost put them back in the drawer. I sought for some explanation of the draught across my face, and found there was a narrow space between my bed and the wall, in which a very thin person could have hidden, but there was no door in the wall, which, like the rest of the room, was panelled in oak.

I went down to breakfast feeling morose and aggrieved. People had no right to put one into a haunted room, I reflected, especially a room haunted by a hideous, old hag. I found the family talking about the thud which had wakened the whole household the previous night. I said shortly that I had heard it too, but as I did not want to alarm my hosts I kept the

story of the apparition to myself. However, when Hildeburg, Mannelin and I were walking up and down in the garden before my departure and she asked me why I was so dejected. I said: "I saw the ghost of old Madame Kratt last night."

"Did you speak to her?" Hildeburg asked laughing, but I thought she looked curiously at me. I told them briefly what had occurred; then, as my carriage had driven up to the door, I took my leave, promising to return the next day to say good-bye before starting with the regiment for our new garrison. I felt gloomy enough, the ghost had shaken my nerves, I was going without speaking my love to Hildeburg and—I was leaving Mannelin with her!

It appears that after I drove off Mannelin spoke seriously of my state of nerves and told Hildeburg that I suffered from hallucinations. She retorted that very likely I had really seen a ghost, and added that she was worried, as her father meant to spend a large sum on renovating the old wing of the house, but if it was so badly haunted she would have to advise him to leave it alone. In short she craftily got Mannelin to volunteer to sleep in the room in order to find out whether there was a ghost or not.

That night he slept in the haunted room. He kept awake and watchful. There came no thud; but the icy blast played over his face, he heard the ghost speak in its thin voice, the bed-curtains fluttered and he saw the horrible figure in the moonlight. It went to the table, opened the drawer, took out the paper and began scratching out some words with the penknife. But Mannelin was either braver or less credulous than I, for he sprang out of bed, noiselessly approached the ghost, caught it by the shoulders and cried out: "Now, Madame, what are you about?"

Like a fury the figure reared itself to almost twice its height and turned its gruesome face to him, but he felt that it was no spirit he had hold of and that a warm body moved beneath the shawls in which Madame Kratt was clothed. He seized the hooked nose in his hand—and, with a wrench, displaced a wax mask under which Hildeburg's laughing face appeared. Without hesitation he kissed her lips and then she confessed

the whole thing. She had made up her mind to put an end to the complicated state of her heart and to set some test by which she should know which of us she loved. The notion of an ordeal by courage had come to her that evening at supper when we had discussed the haunted room. And now she knew that Mannelin was the man she loved, partly because she had felt so unwilling to fighten him when he had readily fallen into the trap and proposed to spend the night in the haunted room; partly because he had ventured to unmask the ghost, and had thus defeated her.

The next day, when I arrived, she and Mannelin told me they were betrothed and how it had come about, and then she explained how she had managed her uncanny trick. The thud she had caused by knocking over a cupboard in the room above mine, it was too heavy to lift and that was why she had been forced to omit this part of her program in Mannelin's ordeal. There was a sliding panel in the wall behind the bed, thro' which she had entered, and the icy blast she had achieved by opening two windows in the passage, so that the draught blew through. My blanket she had twitched off by a string she had fastened to it before I went up to bed, of course she had removed it after she had vanished into the space between the bed and the wall. She had brought the papers and the penknife with her and carried them off again when she retired, that was what the "ghost" had been arranging each time it had bent over the writing-desk! As for the mask, she used to play theatricals as a child and a little white paint had transformed Punchinello into a horrible, grinning old woman, and Hildeburg's white hands into cadaverous claws!

She laughed and rejoiced at my discomfiture, and I saw that there was no longer any doubt in her mind as to which of us she loved. I had missed my happiness through my credulity, you see!"

The Colonel leaned back smiling. "Do you know who Hildeburg was?" he asked Reinhard, "well, we called her Hildeburg, Mannelin and I, but it was not her real name. She was Else Morland—and she is now Frau Reinhard, your

mother, my boy! Tell me, is she alive, is she well? I have never spoken of her, nor asked about her till to-day!"

They fell to talking of Reinhard's parents and Reinhard invited the Colonel and Lucie to visit them at the country-house where years ago the Colonel had seen the ghost, he added: "And Mistress Lucie can play spectre if she will!" He got his answer of course: "When I am so unfortunate as to fall in love with two men, I shall be delighted to frighten one of them!" she said. Decidedly Reinhard was not lucky in his choice of remarks to Lucie, yet when he rose to take his leave she seconded her uncle's invitation to him to stay another day with them. That night he took an old book out of Lucie's library and there he read the story of Don Correa, which he resolved to tell to the Colonel and Lucie on the morrow.

CHAPTER XI.

Don Correa. The Trinkets. End of the "Sinngedicht."

They breakfasted under the plane trees again and when Lucie asked if Reinhard had another romance to tell them, he replied that he had come across the history of a man who had finally chosen a wife from the lowest grade of humanity, with whom he had been perfectly happy:

"Don Correa, Governor of Rio de Janeiro, longed to find a wife who would love him for himself, uninfluenced by his wealth and high rank; so he sailed from Rio and when he reached Lisbon he lived secretly in a wing of his palace, dressed with the utmost simplicity and wandered about the city in search of adventure. One evening at the theatre his admiration was aroused by a remarkably beautiful and distinguished looking lady. She was attended by her confessor, a gentleman and a page-boy. She sat in a sumptuous arm-chair, while they were seated uncomfortably on folding stools, and Don Correa noticed that they never ventured to address their haughty mistress, answering with marked deference when she threw them a word. Don Correa inquired her name, but no one in the theatre knew who she was. He therefore waited at the door, determined to follow the lady and ascertain her identity. When the play ended, she came forth and mounted a splendidly caparisoned mule, her three attendants bestrode less gorgeously trapped steeds and the little procession moved off in ceremonious stateliness. Don Correa followed stealthily. The cavalcade proceeded to the finest inn of the city and Don Correa saw that the lady was received with eager obsequiousness by the innkeeper. The judicious bestowal of a gold piece soon procured Don Correa the information that the lady was

Donna Feniza Major de Cercal, who owned vast estates in South West Portugal, but it was said she was a recluse and lived in a solitary, old tower on the sea coast, attended by a few retainers. She came yearly to Lisbon, but she made and received no visits. She was zealous in her attendance at mass and therefore the hostelry servants concluded there could be no truth in the rumor that she was a witch and her retainers dangerous necromancers.

For days Don Correa shadowed Donna Feniza. Beyond her name and the whereabouts of the tower by the sea, his enquiries had elicited no further information. When Donna Feniza left Lisbon Don Correa resolved to follow her and endeavour to win her heart, but he adhered to his plan of masquerading as a impoverished gentleman. When he sighted the coast whereon stood Donna Feniza's tower, he waited for a stormy day and had his ship sailed so close to the rocks that from the tower it should appear as though she had foundered. Then he sprang into the foam and swam ashore, while the ship drifted out to sea, carefully arranged, with apparently broken masts, to represent a wreck. Don Correa climbed up the cliff under the grim, old tower, and to his joy he soon saw Donna Feniza's page running down to meet him. Don Correa said he had been shipwrecked and was in distress. The page showed him a little cave in the cliff and bade him shelter there until the châtelaine gave orders concerning him. After a time Donna Feniza herself appeared and Don Correa told her the fairy-tale of his shipwreck, saying he was poor but a man of honour. The lady did not probe deeply into the story, she seemed satisfied with what he told her and she undisguisedly approved of the Don's handsome person and chivalrous manners. She conducted him to the castle and entertained him graciously. His wooing was crowned with success, indeed, had he paused to reflect, he might have been astounded at the ease of his victory, but being, by this time, furiously enamoured, he was incapable of reasoned thought. In a few days Don Correa was affianced to Donna Feniza, who was a widow. Without inquiring further concerning his identity, Donna Feniza married him. The wedding took place in the church of the

little town of Cercal, but no one seemed to share in the joy of the bride and bridegroom. Don Correa noticed nothing of this however, and the only incident which momentarily arrested his attention was the frown with which Donna Feniza's serving woman honoured him during the ceremony. She was standing near the elaborate tomb of Donna Feniza's first husband and there was something indescribably menacing in her expression. Little did Don Correa know it was whispered in the neighbourhood she had helped the late Don from slumber in his bed to sleep in his richly ornamented tomb. There were other things said of this sinister attendant, but as Don Correa knew naught of it, he soon forgot the passing impression her evil glance had made on him.

Don Correa tarried at his wife's castle, Donna Feniza was his Calypso and he was enchanted by her wiles, yet after about six months he wearied, not of his lady-love, but of the self-imposed rôle of impoverished gentleman, which he had carefully maintained. He knew too that preferment waited him in the king's service and so he made up his mind to claim his appointment and then return and dazzle his beloved by the announcement of his rank and station. There was an unpleasant incident at his departure: the groom refused to saddle the horse which Don Correa intended to ride on his journey. The fellow said Donna Feniza must give the order, Don Correa's command being insufficient. Don Correa boxed the man's ears, dismissed him from his service, and calling another groom told him to saddle the horse. He then went to take leave of Donna Feniza. He found the groom had got there before him and was expatiating on his version of things, but Don Correa paid no heed to his presence, kissed Donna Feniza fondly, said the groom had been insolent to him and that he had dismissed him, and added that he now dismissed the serving-woman too, as her face did not please him and he desired that both these creatures should have vanished by the time he returned from Lisbon. He again embraced his wife and said farewell. On the stairs he came across the page-boy who shot him an impudent look, whereupon Don Correa cuffed him over the head and told him to inform Donna Feniza that he had discharged him as well.

"If I find you there when I return, I'll throw you out of the window, you young imp," he said.

During his ride to Lisbon Don Correa pondered on the strategy necessary in married life and rejoiced that he was in truth no impecunious gentleman dependent on a wife's bounty and the grudging service of upstarts. But he reflected how delightful it would be when he returned to find his wife surrounded by more pleasant servitors, the present ones having often annoyed him.

In Lisbon he was received with much respect and was appointed Lord Admiral of a fleet which was to sail for Brazil. He had the flagship cabins magnificently decorated and furnished, and purchased everything that could please the taste of a luxurious lady: jewels, satins, velvets, perfumes, comfits of all kinds. He meant to anchor off the coast in view of his lady's castle, fetch Donna Feniza aboard, pretending he was one of the Admiral's officers and then to disclose his identity dramatically.

About an hour after sunset the three great ships anchored off the coast. Don Correa ordered that no lights should be shewn until midnight when he calculated he would be on the way with Donna Feniza, then everything was to be brilliantly illuminated and the guns were to fire in salute. Towards ten o'clock Don Correa landed secretly. He had donned the shabby garments in which he had disguised himself when he had been shipwrecked. He left his boat at the landing steps and took his way unattended to the tower. He found the castle gate barred, but when he knocked with his dagger the bolts were withdrawn. The servant started back as tho' he had seen the devil himself when the light of the lantern fell on Don Correa's face.

"Go on and light me on my way," commanded Don Correa. The man obeyed, at least for a few paces he went on quietly, then suddenly he darted away, leaving Don Correa in darkness. The fellow sprang up the stairs and Don Correa heard how he burst into the dining-hall crying out: "The master is there!" Don Correa followed hard in his wake. He stood spellbound in the doorway, for Donna Feniza was seated at supper with the groom, the confessor, her serving-woman

and a thick-set man of sinister aspect. There was silence for a moment. Then without rising from the table Donna Feniza said in a tone of ostentatious mockery: "Yes indeed! It is really my noble husband! Has your worship lost the fine clothes I gave your nobility, that your honour deigns to reappear in that beggar's coat?"

"It were better to ask," returned Don Correa severely, "why I find your ladyship supping with the menials I have dismissed from our service? And may I ask my exalted spouse who the cavalier is, who sits at my table without my permission?"

"This table belongs to me and he sits at it whom I chose to invite!" Donna Feniza retorted. "Instead of daring to question my will, sit down and sup, but take care that you behave as befits one who has the privilege of sitting at my board!" The parasites burst out laughing and the page, who was standing near Donna Feniza's chair, added his shrill treble to the general hilarity.

Don Correa grew pale. He came forward and laid his hand on the table. "Thus do I behave, Madame, to those who cross my will!" he said fiercely and taking the table in his strong hands he flung it over with the candles, glasses, bottles and dishes. The parasites sprang up and retreated into a corner of the room, all save the stranger who drew his sword and rushed at the admiral. Correa caught up a heavy chair and brought it down on the fellow's shoulder with such violence that the man staggered back, dropped his sword and, howling with pain, clutched his injured shoulder.

"Begone! you rabble!" shouted Don Correa. The parasites retreated hurriedly, only the page-boy cowered behind Donna Feniza. Don Correa took him by his curls and flung him out of the room, then he locked the door and turned to Donna Feniza.

For a moment he gazed at her in silence.

"What sort of a woman are you?" he asked at length, more in sorrow than in anger.

"And who are you to question me?" she replied.

"Who am I?" he retorted, "I am Don Correa, the Admiral!"

She laughed in his face. "You are a windbag, my good Sir!

You are a miserable beggar whom I picked up on the beach! You are a pauper whom I fed and clothed! Don Correa indeed!"

He caught her by the arm and forced her to the window. "There are my ships, Madame," he said sternly, "in half an hour you will be on board. Now adorn yourself, but quickly, for if you linger I will carry you off as you are!" She threw herself into his arms and never had she kissed him more passionately. She whispered words of love, honeyed promises to obey him, to follow him to the end of the world. Then she lured him to her bedroom and, while he stood waiting sombrely, she decked herself out in silks and satins. The clock struck the quarter before midnight.

"If you do not hurry, I shall carry you off as you are," he said again.

"Only my necklace and my great ruby ring!" she cried, "dear my Lord, only suffer me to fetch them! They are in my casket!" She slipped out of the room before Don Correa could hinder her. Softly she turned the key in the lock, then she fled down the stairs to her parasites.

"Set the house on fire! Quickly! I have locked him in! Burn him alive! He is a pirate and has three ships lying at anchor! Quick! Burn the house down! Life and liberty are worth an old tower!" Like a fury she snatched a lighted torch from the wall and set fire to a bundle of straw which lay, as though prepared, beneath the stairs. Her companions followed suit, setting fire to the house at a dozen points. Then they mounted the horses the groom had saddled and the whole gang rode away into the night. At this moment the canon from the Admiral's ship thundered a salute and, as if by magic, the three vessels were lit up from prow to stern. And the castle clock struck midnight.

Don Correa waited for his wife impatiently. At last he went to seek her and found the door locked. He burst it open with a mighty push and was met by clouds of smoke and flames which swept up the stairs. He faced the fire, but it beat him back. Then he turned and fled up into the belfry. He was not minded to be burned alive and his quick brain had suggested a plan of escape. He knew that the bell-rope had been renewed

recently. He took off the old brown cloak of his shabby disguise, wound it about his hands and slid down the rope, reaching the ground unharmed, even his hands not rasped. He found the courtyard a raging furnace, but the wretches had forgotten to fasten the gate, otherwise Don Correa would indeed have perished in the flames.

That same night he sent word to the Governor of Cercal, and before sunrise a detachment of halberdiers surrounded the dwelling in the hills whither Donna Feniza and her accomplices had fled. The blazing castle had aroused the whole countryside and every peasant was ready with information as to where the fugitives were hiding. They all knew her for a wanton, and suspected her of complicity in the sudden demise of her late husband, another unwary Don of handsome person. And now the attempt on Correa's life goaded the peasantry to fury, for Don Correa the Admiral was a name to conjure by just them. Besides, Donna Feniza's parasites were upstarts from that neighbourhood, and if a man is seldom a prophet in his own country, an upstart is never loved among his own class.

By noon Donna Feniza, her scowling servant-woman, her confessor, her page, her grooms and, last not least, the man whose shoulder Don Correa had broken with the chair, by noon the whole gang was brought aboard the Admiral's ship accompanied by various gentlemen of the law, with all the papers they possessed anent the lady and her confederates. Don Correa stood beneath a baldaquin on the deck, he was dressed in black velvet and the chain of the Golden Fleece was on his breast. He was a grand and stately figure and Donna Feniza's eyes narrowed when they met his, but he turned away from her, a quiver of pain making his mouth sterner in his effort to control it. The gentlemen of the law began their elaborate accusation of the gang, but they might have spared themselves the labour, for e're half a dozen questions had been put, each member of that sorry crew broke forth into bitter recrimination one of the other. It came out that Donna Feniza's first husband had in truth been sent to his account by poison, which the serving-woman had administered at her lady's instigation,

because the lady had conceived a passion for the woman's brother, a bandit, professional thief and murderer, no other indeed than the stranger Don Correa had found at supper, and who now leaned against the ship's bulwarks nursing his broken shoulder and muttering maledictions. Grooms and page and confessor had all been in the plot more or less—this plot and several others, it appeared, for Donna Feniza was a tigress with a skin of satin, a black heart of lust and a soul as false as cruel. It came out too that after a time she had wearied of her base, forceful paramour, or he of her—the accounts differed—anyway he had gone off to seek other pastures for his browsings and Correa had come along. The wanton's passion for Don Correa had begun to wane about the time when he had gone to Lisbon and, by chance, the other man had come swaggering back the very day Correa left. He had been received with amorous rapture (old loves revive sometimes and old lusts, after an interval, seem new) and Donna Feniza had taken a veritable hatred to Don Correa, the shabby knight, as she believed him to be. She and her menials, who hated him for his dislike of them, had plotted to rid themselves of this obnoxious intruder. They had planned to burn him out the first night after his return, and their arrangements had been near completed, but they had not expected him quite so soon, and thus he had surprised them at supper, which was clearly not in their scheme.

The death sentence alone could meet such guilt and yet Don Correa—who as Lord Admiral should speak it—yet Don Correa hesitated. He had loved the woman after all, and had she seen thro' his disguise, he told himself, she might have sailed away with him and been redeemed from vice. Was she so much to blame for not seeing the honest nobleman in him, when he had failed to recognise the tigress in her? He sighed—and then the legal gentlemen spoke of her crimes, of her murdered husband and her foul intent—The Admiral sighed again, then spoke the sentence upon the gang—and upon Donna Feniza Major de Cercal, of the perfect body and black heart.

They were shot at sunset one and all, justice demanded it. And Don Correa sailed away to Brazil, with deep sorrow and

disgust as his loathed comrades, instead of the lovely bride he had dreamed of as the companion of his voyage.

For ten years Don Correa distrusted and hated all women, yet wherever he went they offered him their favours and he lived gayly, but there was a wound in his soul for all that. Gradually he tired of light amours and the longing to find a heart which would be his, the yearning to give his life into faithful keeping, grew strong in him.

His ships were ordered to the coast of West Africa to turn out the Dutch who had seized some Portuguese colonies, and, if possible too, Don Correa was to acquire more lands for Portugal. He waged war against the King of Angola, a powerful native monarch. As His dusky Majesty dwelled in the inaccessible regions of his kingdom and the campaign was dragging out to an unconscionable length, Don Correa sent an embassy to the King proposing to treat and the King despatched his sister, the Princess Annachinga to negotiate with the Admiral. The black Princess came in state, attended by numerous much decorated, if little clothed, warriors, and bringing a herd of elephants, giraffes and several lions and tigers as gifts to Portugal's envoy. Her Highness approached in an enormous swaying vehicle, drawn by oxen. She sat, beneath a silken awning, arrayed in royal robes and a treasury of precious stones and golden chains upon her breast and arms. Her face was immutable as an ebony idol's. She was received by a fanfare of trumpets and the clash of cymbals and the Portuguese officers led her ceremoniously to the tent where Admiral Correa awaited her. He wore a burnished inlaid cuirass, a cloak of black velvet and the insignia of various high orders glittered on his breast. The tent was hung with carpets, the ground was strewn with them, yet there was but one tall, gilded chair before which stood Don Correa. A red silk cushion was placed opposite this chair, that was the only seat accorded to the native Princess. When Annachinga entered, one of the Admiral's gentlemen pointed to this cushion and begged her to repose upon it, but, though the interpreter explained the matter, Her Highness neither responded nor deigned to cast her eyes upon the cushion. She turned to

her attendant ladies, making an imperious sign to them and immediately one sprang forward, crouched and stretching out her arms, assumed the pose of the Sphinx of Egypt. With the utmost unconcern the Princess seated herself upon this human throne, resting her feet upon the cushion whereon her Portuguese adversaries had believed she would have squatted in obedient servility. The interview was of some duration and Don Correa found it no easy task to baffle her feminine shrewdness and to subdue her native pride. A partial agreement having been reached, Her Highness rose and, with dignified mien, took her leave. Don Correa noticed that the slave, who had served as chair, remained in her crouching attitude. He drew the Princess's attention to this, but she did not even bestow a glance upon her slave and answered haughtily:

"I never sit twice upon the same chair. It can remain in your Magnificence's mansion." Without another word Annachinga passed out of the audience tent. Don Correa, who had accompanied the Princess to the threshold, returned and looked down at the poor human chair. The slave girl still lay in the sphinx-like position. He could not see her face, only the contours of a slim body, a mass of black hair which he noticed was fine and glossy, pale-brown shoulders and perfectly modelled arms. She wore a white tunic which clung to her limbs outlining their slender grace.

Although Don Correa regarded slaves and coloured people as creatures scarcely higher in the biological scale than vermin, a ray of pity shot through his heart for this being, whose beauty of body had struck him. He bent towards her and said kindly: "How much longer do you mean to remain there? Rise, slave!" The girl guessed the meaning of his words or understood the kindness in his voice, for she raised herself, but she was so cramped by the torture of her strained attitude (and Annachinga had been no feather-weight) that she staggered and would have fallen had not Don Correa given her his hand and supported her for a moment. She stood before him, a revelation of grace and beauty. He saw that her face was not of the native type, but more like the features of some Egyptian princess of olden days. Her eyes were cast down in deference and Don Correa,

moved by compassion and a little curiosity, put his hand under her chin and lifted her face to him. Such wonderful eyes met his! Deep and tragic and lustrous! And her lips were red and young and infinitely fresh and pure.

For ten years Don Correa had despised women, but something at once proud and appealing in this savage's face stirred his heart. He put his arm round the girl, kissed her softly on cheek and brow, in token, he assured himself, of his ownership of her. He promptly decided this heathen should be christened and freed from slavery. He summoned his page, gave the native woman into his charge and ordered him to convey her to Loanda, where the wife and family of one of his officers resided.

The negotiations with the King of Angola continued for some time, the Princess Annachinga making various progresses from the inland to the coast. Don Correa had her questioned about the slave she had given him. He took care to speak of the girl as though she had been a rare animal, asking after her pedigree and her health. Annachinga replied that the slave, Zambo, had come from the country towards the sunrise, she was probably a survivor of some extinct tribe; Annachinga had bought her from a slave dealer as a small child, she must now be seventeen years of age; she was skilled in weaving, but had not been instructed in the art of life. Don Correa felt a distinct satisfaction when the interpreter mentioned the last item. Annachinga remarked that the slave might be useful to Don Correa's illustrious wife, she was fairly obedient, but required the whip at times like all slaves. Annachinga apologised that, as she had not prepared Zambo as a gift, she had omitted to have her fashionably arranged and thus unfortunately she was neither tattooed nor had she a ring through her nose, and her front teeth had not been knocked out. But the Princess doubted not that the noble Admiral could easily have these defects remedied before presenting the slave to his worshipful lady. Don Correa caused Annachinga to be profusely thanked for the information and he then continued the discussion of affairs of state.

After some weeks Don Correa betook himself to Loanda and found that the ceremony of Zambo's christening was to

take place forthwith, it had been postponed until the Admiral's arrival, as he had condescended to stand sponsor to the convert. The ceremony passed off without a hitch and Zambo received the name of Maria. She submitted patiently to the demands of her new masters: had water dashed over her face, old men in rich garments marked her brow with their fingers in a strange sign, boys in lace tunics swung pannikins at her, out of which perfumed smoke rose in blue clouds. She was then led to the altar and made to kneel before the shrine of the Blessed Mother whose name she bore. Now, the Madonna's statue had recently been restored. It was a wooden figure of crude workmanship, but the paint and varnish on the face made ample amends for other shortcomings. In particular the remarkably developed nose was so highly varnished that, in the dim church light, it appeared to overpower the face. Suddenly Zambo-Maria caught sight of the nose, she imagined it to be the face of another spirit protruding from the Madonna's visage. With a terrified cry she sprang up and fled to Don Correa, pointing at the Madonna and talking excitedly. An interpreter explained her meaning and instantly a shout went up: "The heathen has seen the spirit of God Himself in the face of His Mother!" The Jesuits were not slow to take advantage of the popular rendering of Zambo-Maria's hallucination. A *Te Deum* was sung and the frightened savage-girl was carried round the church and through the city in triumph. A miracle had happened at her baptism and she was predestined to serve the Church, it was said.

There was a banquet in the Admiral's honour and the convert was seated opposite him. Don Correa talked affably with the company, but his eyes strayed constantly to Zambo-Maria. She scarcely ate of the rich viands set before her, for, although she had received some tuition in European ways, she did not trust herself to eat before so many people. Don Correa filled a plate with sweetmeats and handed it to her and these she ate obediently and fearlessly, her slender brown fingers holding the sugared cakes to her red lips with dainty grace. Of course the guests complimented Don Correa with fitting servility upon his condescension.

When the feast was ended the company went into the garden where the world seemed aflame in the brief glory of the tropical sunset. Zambo-Maria stood apart beneath a palm tree and gazed at the fiery splendor. She stretched out her hand in a gesture of homage to the dying sun. Was it some subconscious memory of the cult of her vanished race which instigated her? Or was it the yearning of her lonely heart towards the beauty of the universe? Don Correa watching her thought the latter and a wave of tenderness surged through him. He went to her, took her hand and, drawing her to him, kissed her brow. Then he slipped a little gold ring upon her finger, laid his hand gently on her mouth to show her that she must keep this secret, then with a smile he left her. The next day she was conveyed aboard one of his ships with instructions that she should be delivered to Don Correa's sister the abbess of a Dominican convent in Rio. He wrote to his sister begging her to have his godchild educated and prepared to play her part as a European lady.

The Jesuits in Loanda made a mighty pother about the disappearance of their convert, but Don Correa's arrangements had been so carefully concealed, that the miracle mongers were baffled.

For a year Don Correa sailed the high seas, then he went to Rio to claim Zambo Maria. When he stood before the Lady Abbess, his sister, he could scarcely hide his impatience to see his brown enchantress again. To his consternation the stern nun informed him that the native girl had escaped from the convent some time since and no one knew where she was. All his fevered questioning proved useless. His pious sister eyed her angry brother with severity and suspicion and repeated that the brown girl had vanished.

Miserable and furious Don Correa returned to his dwelling. Oh! why had he not married Zambo-Maria directly after her christening? Why had he exposed that pure, wild creature to the wiles and conspiracies of Christians? For he suspected that the priests had a hand in Zambo's disappearance. He sat in his tall chair, his head in his hands and wept. Thus his page, Luis, found him when he came with welcome news. The boy

had been gossiping with the wife of the skipper of a French sailing-ship. She lived alongside the Dominican nunnery and whether it was true or not that she was a heretic, at any rate she had little love for the haughty, bigoted nuns. She told Luis that the brown girl, who had been in the convent, had been sent to Cadix on board the French sailing vessel and was to be taken to a Dominican convent. She said too that she had heard, thro' a woman who was employed in the convent bakery, that the girl was to be given out as a saint and miracle-worker and that the priests had great hopes of her.

Don Correa lost no time in sailing for Portugal. His impatience knew no bounds during the voyage, but, when he reached the Andalusian coast, what was his despondency when he found the harbour of Cadix closed to all ships, as the pest was raging in the city! He decided to continue his voyage to Lisbon and to set the page, Luis, on land, entrusting him with the search for Zambo. The boy was landed on a solitary part of the coast and Don Correa sailed away full of misgivings and anxiety, but knowing Luis' love of adventure and his extraordinary perspicacity and resourcefulness, he felt he could not have confided the quest to a more capable emissary. After all the page only needed to discover Zambo's hiding-place, and then Don Correa's influence at Court would be sufficient to force the churchmen to disgorge their prey.

Luis reached Cadix without mishap, he was disguised as a sailor-lad, no one paid heed to his comings and goings and he soon found the Dominican nunnery. Then he bought a donkey, a peasant girl's costume and some baskets of oranges. He bestrode his donkey and rode to the convent. Fortune favoured him, for, just as he came up, the gate was opened to admit a doctor and he heard the sister-portress wailing that the Abbess was stricken with the pest. Luis rode calmly past the weeping nun. Everything was out of gear in the convent, the nuns were running hither and thither, gossiping and lamenting, and Luis on his donkey ambled unhindered through various courtyards. He came to an inner garden where several nuns were standing about chattering. He offered his oranges for sale and the sisters willingly bought a few, especially as the

wily youth sold them at a low price. While this was going on, Luis's sharp eyes explored the convent windows and to his joy he espied Zambo peering through a lattice. She was not dressed as a nun, he noticed with satisfaction. And now he commenced praising his wares: "Buy my oranges, noble ladies! The doctors say they are good for the blood! I'll sell them cheap and tell you the news of the town as well!" He spoke loudly so that Zambo should be sure of hearing. "Yes yes, there's pest in the land! Even the Cadix harbour is closed. And just think, yesterday Don Correa the Admiral was not allowed to enter and he had business here, they say! He's gone to Lisbon now, to his palace! Buy my oranges! Then I can get home again!"

Now an older nun appeared. "What's the country wench doing here?" she demanded angrily, "and what nonsense is she talking about admirals? Give account of yourself, you hussy!"

Luis dug his heels into his donkey's flanks and the animal began to kick out, while the oranges were scattered right and left. Some of the nuns grabbed at the fallen fruit, others shrank before the donkey's hoofs and Luis jumped off and ran for his life through the various courtyards and cloisters. He knew well enough that if the priests got hold of him—and he mistrusted the stern, old nun who had demanded an account of the peasant girl, a peasant girl speaking Portuguese instead of Spanish—he knew well enough that he would not get out of the convent for many a long day—perhaps never.

He reached the inn where he had left his sailor's disguise, slipped up the stairs unobserved, and in a few minutes a young sailor lounged down the sunlit streets and out of the city.

As happy as a bird Luis arrived in Lisbon a week later. Don Correa greeted him joyfully and that very day the Government of Portugal requested the Church to give up Donna Zambo Maria, Admiral Don Correa's affianced bride, wrongfully detained in the Dominican convent at Cadix. But alas! Correa knew that these negotiations would take many weeks, possibly months, and his beloved might die of the pest, be dead and buried long before he could rescue her.

One evening Don Correa was sitting in his palace with his

faithful page. The candles in the silver sconces were out but Don Correa was sunk in thought as he sat there with his hand. He was dreaming of Zambo. Luis had

The tinkle of a bell broke the stillness. It was not Don Correa thought it had been his fancy. Again a faint jangle, it was as though some one had touched the bellhandle at the palace door, but had not had the strength to move it much. Don Correa woke his page. "Go down and see if there is some one craving admittance," he said, then he rubbed his hand across his brow wearily. What did he want of his visitors, now that all his hopes were shattered?

The door was thrown open and Luis appeared a tall slender woman by the hand. With a broken step she came to Don Correa and sank down at his feet. It was Zambo Maria in such dust-stained garments that she seemed like a specter of wraith. Don Correa raised her in his arms and found she had fainted. Very gently he carried her to a divan, then the servants were summoned and the poor girl was put to bed. She was like some exotic flower which had been trampled.

The next morning Zambo had recovered sufficiently to tell Don Correa the story of her adventures. She had told Luis in his peasant-girl disguise and understood that he had brought her in his noisy advertisement of her. "You see, my Lord, I know Portuguese now!" she said.

The Dominican abbess had died of the pest and the nuns had perished too. Disorder had reigned in the convent and Zambo Maria had taken advantage of it to escape. She left the town on foot and tramped on for many days before she had found water to drink sometimes. When she came to a village she asked her way to Lisbon and everybody was kind to her and told her which road to take. She had taken a letter with her, the nuns had never known she had it, but she had learned enough of Europe to understand that money was valuable and she had kept it hidden from them. He would remember he had sent her some gold pieces when she sailed for Brazil? She managed to buy food in Seville and then she toiled on, over the hills and through the valleys, asking the people she met for the road to Lisbon.

missed her way and thus she had been long on her journey. Where had she slept? In the woods—anywhere—she was a native woman, she said with a deprecating smile and she needed no roof above her. But her lord, her owner, had sent her his commands to rejoin him, and she had come to him as was her duty. She had reached Lisbon at sunset, at first she had been terrified of the crowded streets then at last an old man had said he would guide her to Don Correa's palace, had brought her to within sight of it and left her with kindly words. She thought he had blessed her. Don Correa, looking at her pure beauty, thought so too, but he shuddered at the perils this beautiful and innocent creature had passed through unscathed.

The nuns had taken Don Correa's ring away from Zambo Maria, humbly she prayed him to pardon her, but she had not been able to keep it from them. He took out his jewel-casket, found a ring which had belonged to his mother, and slipped it on to Zambo's finger; then he kissed her lips for the first time, and told her she was to be his wife.

The wedding took place with much pomp in the Lisbon Cathedral, His Majesty of Portugal sent an envoy to wish the strange couple joy and, for nearly ten days, the Portuguese court spoke of little save of Don Correa and his bride.

The Admiral sailed once more for Brazil, this time with a devoted woman at his side. He found that the nuns had taught her nothing save Portuguese, Spanish and a few legends of the Saints, and so he set himself to teach his beloved that she was no slave, but a free soul, the more free because of his deep love of her.

One day they stood together beneath the silken awning on the ship's deck. Zambo-Maria gazed out to sea in silence for a time, then she said:

"Has the sea got a soul too and is it free?"

"Nay," he answered, "the sea and the tempests are subject to God Almighty. Tell me, Zambo-Maria," he asked, "had you known you were free would you have given me your heart?"

"You ask too late, dear my Lord, as the sea belongs to the God of all, so do I belong to you," she replied with her subtle eastern smile. But she saw that her answer saddened him, and

with a grand and generous gesture she laid both her slim brown hands in his.*

After Reinhard told this story there was a little sparring between him and Lucie and then she proposed to recount a tale she had read of the infatuation of a European for a native girl. The Colonel said that, as she only meant to poke fun at their guest, he feared she would surely choose an anecdote illustrating the foolishness of men, but Reinhard vowed he could well endure being teased by Mistress Lucie and so she told the story of "The Trinkets:"

"Thibaut de Vallormes, a young noble of Touraine, was appointed page of honour at the wedding of the Dauphin Louis to Marie Antoinette. After the ceremony he was summoned to Versailles along with the other pages and presented to Madame la Dauphine, who handed each boy a gift. Thibaut received a gold watch and Marie Antoinette said smiling that he must earn the trinkets to go with it. On the way back to Paris Thibaut, asked his comrades what the Dauphine had meant and was told that she had alluded to the fact that every gentleman carried the trophies of his amorous adventures fastened to his watch-chain. Now, though Thibaut was a greenhorn and as yet understood naught of love affairs, he yearned to have some trinkets, so on his return to Tours he pestered everybody to give him any little jewel they happened to be wearing, but he was generally rapped over the fingers and sent about his

* In Don Correa Keller took the name of the seventeenth century Portuguese Admiral Don Salvador Correa di San Benavides in vain, for tho' it was he who fought the Dutch and conquered fourteen West African tribes, in especial subduing the Angolean Princess, Annachinga, who was celebrated for her cruelty, yet the Don Correa who brought a native bride to Europe was a different personage. This was a sixteenth century Spanish adventurer, Diego Correa, who, shipwrecked in the bay of San Salvador, swam to shore, was befriended by a native tribe and tarried with his rescuers for some years, adopting their language and customs. He married the daughter of their chief, the beautiful Paraguassu, and took her to Europe. The couple appeared at the Court of Henri II of France and Catherine de Medicis stood sponsor at Paraguassu's christening. Keller blended these two historical Correas and made his Don Correa from them.

business. A few months later he went to visit some relations at Beaugency and here he became acquainted with a beautiful girl, Guillemette. She was twenty-two and Thibaut was sixteen so, of course, he fell in love with her. It was his first love, but being a practical youth, even in the fervour of his infatuation, he did not forget the trinkets! Guillemette always wore a coral heart on a black velvet ribbon round her neck, it was the gift of her betrothed, an officer serving in the colonies, and she had promised to wear it day and night until he came home to wed her. She loved the officer, but it amused her to coquet with Thibaut, yet when the foolish boy fell on his knees and prayed her to let him kiss her, she laughed and called him a silly loon. His soul grew bitter within him, and he resolved to steal the coral heart. One afternoon when Guillemette was enjoying a siesta in the arbour, Thibaut crept in and, with diabolical skill, unhooked the coral heart from the velvet ribbon and tiptoed away without waking Guillemette. When she awoke and missed her love-token there was a grand to-do, she searched high and low, asking everybody if they had seen it. She questioned Thibaut, but he denied all knowledge of it, yet somehow she suspected him. Tearfully she implored him to give it back, but the more she implored the more the young rascal swore he had not got it. Then he went off to Tours and took good care not to show himself in Beaugency again. Poor Guillemette! Her lover came home, disbelieved she had lost the coral heart, thought she had been playing with hearts of other kinds, and broke off the engagement. Thibaut had recovered from his calf-love since Guillemette had laughed at him—he'd got his first trinket and that was all he cared for.

Thibaut now became a lieutenant. One day at the theatre he noticed a pretty girl. This was Denise, the daughter of a wealthy merchant. She wore a little crystal heart, as Thibaut saw. Her own heart was as clear as crystal too, and without hesitation she gave it to Thibaut, the handsome officer, so far above her in rank, who deigned to notice her. Then he wrote her a number of love-ditties. They were copied from Monsieur Dorat's poems or Madame la Marquise d'Antremont's or from any other fashionable poet of the day, but Denise did

not know this and imagined her Monsieur de Vallormes to be a great poet. As for Denise's mother, she was as pleased as an unwise mother generally is at the notion of her daughter marrying above her, and an honest merchant, who had previously been a favoured suitor, was now treated with such disdain by mother and daughter, that he withdrew his suit. Then Thibaut asked Denise to give him, not her human heart which was already his, but the crystal heart she wore. She gave it him, thinking him a fairy prince, and he proved his magic powers by vanishing from her sight from that day onward. Such a trouble there was to rehook the merchant! And though he married Denise, who had a substantial fortune, he was a surly lout and he used the story with Monsieur de Vallormes to bully his wife—implying—well, we need not go into that, but his hints were sufficient to browbeat poor Denise. It was a sad little story, but Thibaut got his second trinket and that was the chief thing.

The next victim was Thibaut's Aunt Angelica, a sentimental spinster of fifty years. Thibaut recollected that, as a child, he had often admired the many little baubles which "ma chère petite Tante" was in the habit of wearing. And now he fancied he might get hold of one or two without much trouble. He paid a visit to Aunt Angelica and found her sitting writing at her *escritoire*. He hung over her, laughing and talking, while his inquisitive fingers toyed with the small boxes, ornaments and knicknacks on the spinster's table. In one of the boxes he discovered a little opal heart.

"Oh! what a pretty jewel, ma Tante!" he cried, "do give it me!"

"But mercy on the child! What an idea!" Aunt Angelica exclaimed shrilly, "and pray what would you do with it? Give it to some woman, I'll be bound!"

"No no I'd wear it on my watch chain and think of my pretty little Aunt Angelica!" he weedled.

"I cannot give it you, dear nephew," she said in a softer tone, "the lover of my youth gave it me thirty years ago."

Then Thibaut induced her to tell her love-story: how she had been adored—adored you understand—by the most handsome, most gallant of young noblemen; and how she was to

have been his bride, but ah! God! he had been slain that spring day which brought victory to France on the field of Fontenoy. Aunt Angelica dried her eyes and launched into a panegyric of her hero, a very poem it was, joyous in its remembrance, tragic in its regret. And the recital of her memories brought such a glow to her cheek, such a light to her eyes that, for a moment, she looked young and dangerously lovable for all her fifty years. What had that rogue Thibaut better to do, than to fall at her feet, whisper that had he been born at a better time he too would have loved his delicious little aunt? Nay, even now he loved her as only a soul can love the soul of its mate! The years were cruel that divided him from his dearest, prettiest, most captivating aunt. And Angelica, between her too sweet memories and this boy's hot words, lost her head a little—drew Thibaut to her—kissed him—let him kiss her.

"Give me your heart, divine Angelica," he murmured between his kisses—and by my faith! for the moment he hardly knew if he meant her heart or its opal counterfeit. Of course she gave him the jewel heart—but whether that other jewel, the heart in her poor widowed breast, was his for a time or remained true to the long dead soldier of Fontenoy, who shall say? All that concerns us is that Thibaut, young mountebank that he was, got the opal trinket and went off highly pleased with himself.

The episode with Tante Angélique had taught him to woo better than of yore and he courted every lady he met: young, middle-aged, maidens and matrons, and soon he was notorious, even in Paris, for his amours and the wealth of baubles which dangled from his watch-chain. Then he turned serious, or grew sated with pleasure, which comes to the same thing; read Jean Jacques Rousseau and prated of freedom and the simpler life, of nature and the rest. Believed in all too after a fashion, which was the mode of his day. He sailed with the six thousand men under Monsieur de Rochambeau to join La Fayette's army which was to bring freedom to the Americans groaning, it was said, under England's yoke.

The French army came in contact with various Indian tribes and seeing wild creatures, untrammelled by the curses of

civilisation, the liberty enthusiasts fraternised with the savages. As for Thibaut, he hung about constantly in the wigwams of one of the tribes. He said he was studying the free, wild men, but, as a fact, he was chiefly occupied with a free, wild maiden, the beautiful Quoneschi. Apparently civilisation could have taught this delightful creature little in the art of capturing the masculine prey, and Thibaut, who had deceived a hundred subtle coquettes in Paris, until he had wearied of love-making, now fell a victim to a woman's wiles. He vowed he would woo Quoneschi, marry her, take her to the Court of France, show the ladies of Versailles what a glorious thing he had found: a child of nature indeed, even beyond the dreams of Jean Jacques!

There was to be a feast to celebrate the conclusion of a treaty between the Indian Chiefs and the French Generals, and, in the evening, the Red Skins were to dance their war dance by torch light. The preceding day Thibaut declared his passion to Quoneschi and told her he intended to ask Monsieur son Père for her hand in marriage. Whether Quoneschi understood is doubtful, but she caressed Thibaut until he was addle-headed. She pointed to the trinkets on his watch-chain and murmured something which Thibaut could not comprehend, but her gestures indicated clearly that she coveted the jewels. She got out one word of English (she knew a few, possibly about as many as Thibaut himself!) "Tomorrow!" she said and implored him with hands and eyes to give her the trinkets. "Tomorrow! Tomorrow!" she repeated. When he shook his head, she seemed downcast, laid her hand on her heart and sighed. Then it struck him that her meaning was that she would announce her betrothal to him on the morrow at the war dance. Probably an Indian custom, he concluded. After all, he reflected, if he gave her the trinkets it would be a beautiful symbol of his renunciation of the wicked ways of civilisation and a tribute to the purity of this child of nature. And besides she would surely give him back his property when she proclaimed her betrothal to him. So he gave her the gewgaws and she was delightfully, enchantingly, innocently grateful to him and she said "tomorrow, tomorrow" over and over again.

The next evening, the French officers repaired to the Red

Skins' camp; there was a banquet which, to say the truth, was a little trying to the Europeans' palates, but Thibaut was blissful, for Quoneschi served him and he swallowed the unfamiliar viands and the fearful sticky sweetmeats obediently. Joyfully he watched Quoneschi, the innocent child of nature, as she bantered with her friends. She was hinting to them concerning her love-story, he thought.

Then came the war-dance. The guests were seated in a circle and sweet Quoneschi placed herself at Thibaut's feet. She smiled and nodded at him confidently and the other officers joked, a little enviously, at his proverbial good fortune with the fair sex. Into the circle marched the warriors who were to perform the war-dance. They were magnificent and terrifying, with towering feathered head-dresses, a multitude of leather thongs and fringes, bead-chains and shells and metal ornaments making curious hanging girdles, while their bare, shining breasts and arms and even their faces were painted in a hundred weird designs. They carried battle-axes, spears and scalping knives and several displayed human scalps at their belts. The camp fires and the torches flamed and the dance began. Into the glow there leaped a gigantic Indian brandishing his battle-axe and yelling like a demon. This was Thunder Bear, a famous warrior. Quoneschi, who had been lying at Thibaut's feet, raised herself and gave vent to a loud and joyous cry. She plucked at Thibaut's sleeve, chattering something. He looked at her inquiringly. Then the nasal voice of an American interpreter said dryly: "The young female says, Mister Officer, that yonder big savage is her sweetheart and that she will be his bride before tomorrow morning."

Thibaut, struck dumb with consternation, stared at the leaping, yelling Thunder Bear, who came nearer and nearer in the course of his frantic dance. Suddenly there was a peal of laughter from the French officers: "Parbleu! Thunder Bear has got all Monsieur de Vallormes' trinkets hanging on his nose!" To his miserable amazement Thibaut saw how from the savage's brow there dangled, over his blue painted nose, the whole glittering bunch of love-tokens: poor Guillemette's coral heart, the crystal heart little Denise had given, Aunt Angelica's

opal jewel and dozens of other trinkets which Thibaut had wrested from the generous ladies of Paris—little crosses, medallions, charms, even rings and jewelled pendants! All were there, swaying and bobbing upon Thunder Bear's nose!

But a still crueller mortification awaited Thibaut: with a deafening yell Thunder Bear swooped down, caught up Quoneschi and, letting out a series of unearthly howls, danced out of the firelit circle with her in his arms.

Never again did Thibaut see his Quoneschi, the innocent child of nature, and never more did he set eyes upon the trinkets he had spent his youth in collecting."

Lucie looked at Reinhard with laughing eyes when she had finished her anecdote, then she hastened away pretending she had to attend to household matters. For all Reinhard had asserted he could bear Lucie's teasing he was visibly nettled by the Trinket Story, for it was clearly a parody of his contention that the male is the arbiter in love affairs. The Colonel soothed him, saying it was more complimentary to him to be met by Lucie's combative spirit, than if she had treated his opinion with cool indifference. Reinhard acquiesced, rather ruefully, and took his leave, promising to visit the Colonel and his niece again.

The long interrupted friendship between the Colonel and Reinhard's parents was now resumed and Reinhard heard that he and his niece had paid a visit to the pseudo-haunted house where he had missed his happiness through his credulity. Shortly afterwards came a letter from Lucie inviting Reinhard to visit them again and adding that, as fellow guests, he would find his father and mother. Reinhard had thought much of Lucie since the summer. He had not renewed his quest for the woman who would blush and laugh when kissed; indeed, he was ashamed of his presumption, and even his theory of the male right to choose his wife, as though she were a jewel to be selected at will, seemed less obvious to him nowadays. He was silent and subdued when he arrived at the Colonel's house and, curiously enough, Lucie seemed thoughtful too. Certainly she was less combative. Thus the first days of his visit passed tranquilly.

One afternoon the old people went to visit some neighbours, while both Lucie and Reinhard had excellent reasons for staying at home. Lucie said she had housekeeping to do and Reinhard wished to study. Anxious that her guest should find the volumes he needed, she followed him into the library. As he opened a book a little embroidered picture fluttered out from between the pages. Lucie took it from him saying she had embroidered it when she was in the convent.

"I am a Catholic," she said and he noticed that she blushed.

"You need not blush for it!" he said teasingly.

"No," she answered, "but, you see, I was not born a Catholic, I became one."

Then she told him the episode of her childhood which had influenced her whole life. Her father had been a Protestant and her mother, although a Catholic, had obeyed him in all things. Thus Lucie had been brought up a Protestant and her mother even attended the Lutheran church. Sometimes however, she had visited her sister, a nun in a neighbouring convent, taking Lucie with her. These were red-letter days for the child, who was much petted by the nuns, but Lucie's chief joys were the visits of her mother's cousin Leodegar, who called Lucie his little wife. When she was eight years old her hero left the neighbourhood, but a recollection of him lingered in her mind, especially that he had called her his little wife. When she was twelve her mother died and she was given into the charge of a governess. Her father was frequently absent and she became a lonely little being, full of dreams and whimsies. When she was about fifteen she heard that cousin Leodegar had returned to the neighbourhood. Immediately her childish phantasy wove a romance!

When Leodegar came to see her he treated her with that jocularly with which grown up people annoy children. Every child resents it, but when it is employed by the secret hero of a child's dreams it is agony. Leodegar expressed surprise that Lucie had grown. It is a curious trait of the human intelligence that this astonishment is so often accorded to this inevitable phenomenon of child-life. Leodegar said he could no longer call Lucie his little wife, as she would soon be a grown-up bride.

With quivering dignity she invited him to dine with her and her governess and he condescended to accept. It was a terrible meal—and oh! how carefully she had ordered it, how prettily she had arranged the flowers on the table, with what trepidation she had dressed and even manœuvred that her governess should be adorned in her best! Lucie was silent, stiff, embarrassed, miserable. To conceal her shyness she clutched the decanter and poured wine into Leodegar's glass. In her nervousness she filled it to the brim and the wine overflowed. The governess promptly reprimanded her and Leodegar, to improve matters, said: "Little cousin, if you are so awkward, I shall not be able to marry you after all!" It was like a nightmare.

After dinner Leodegar proposed a walk in the wood. He remarked casually that he was leaving the next day and did not know when he would be in the neighbourhood again. To Lucie this seemed like the announcement of the imminent end of the world and as she followed her cousin along the woodland path her tears fell fast, but neither the governess nor Leodegar noticed her. Then the governess, who had a mania for entomology, espied a rare beetle and, kilting up her skirts, rushed into the wood, leaving Lucie with Leodegar.

"What is it?" he inquired turning to Lucie, and then he saw that she was crying. "What, how's this?" he said, "my little wife in tears! That will never do!" He took her hand and went on and sat down on a bench. He put his arm round Lucie with condescending brotherliness and asked her what was amiss, whereupon she demanded when—when—when he really meant to marry her? He hesitated, then he drew her to him, lifted her face to his, looked in her eyes and said he would marry her when she became a Catholic. She answered that her father was a Protestant, but her mother, who was a Catholic, had married him. A shadow came over Leodegar's face and he said he thought more seriously about these matters. Then he bent down to Lucie and was going to kiss her when the governess reappeared. He said good-bye, patted his little cousin's hand and enjoined her to be a good girl.

That night Lucie laid awake thinking over Leodegar's words. There was decidedly nothing for it save to become a

Catholic forthwith, and then her beloved hero would marry her. She got out of bed, dressed and made her way noiselessly thro' the dark house. She reached the front door undiscovered, slipped out and ran down to the boathouse on the river, untied the boat and jumping in, pushed off and half rowed, half drifted down stream. It was no very safe undertaking, but she managed it and, as the sun was rising, she reached the landing-stage in the garden of the convent, where her mother's sister was a nun.

Her aunt was aghast at the escapade, but when she heard the cause of it she believed in the direct intervention of God. For months Lucie stayed at the convent, while the governess continued her beetle-catching, her momentary anxiety having been relieved by a message that Lucie was well and happy. Lucie was instructed in the Catholic faith and received into the Church. It was only after the ceremony that she owned the real reason of her ardour for conversion. The good nuns were chagrined, but they trusted that the blessed Saints would lead the child to true piety all the same. Then Lucie's father returned from his travels. Furious at finding the neglectful governess calmly studying entomology, he turned her out of the house, and hastened to the convent to fetch his daughter. When he heard that Lucie had joined the Church there was an unpleasant scene and she was marched home and treated as tho' she had committed, if not a crime, at least a highly improper action and soon after she was packed off to a Lutheran school. She was fairly happy there, although her loneliness smote her when the other schoolgirls were visited by their mothers. Lucie nursed two secrets in her lonely heart: her Catholicism and her love of Leodegar, for, though she heard nothing of him, she never doubted he would claim her as his bride. One day she received a letter from her father who was in Italy. He wrote that, as he had excellent accounts of her, he would fetch her at the end of that term and take her with him to Italy. She read the letter with delight, then a postscript caught her eye: "I met your dear mother's cousin, Leodegar, yesterday. He has become a Redemptorist Father and goes about in a long black habit with a rosary at his side."

So much for Lucie's love-dream! But she tried to console

herself with the idea of seeing Italy. Alas! her father fell ill of fever in Rome and died. So it was a black-clad, forsaken, little maiden who returned home at the end of the term. Then her mother's brother, the Colonel, had come to her rescue and ever since he had been father, friend and comrade to Lucie, his "dear Lux" as he called her.

"There! I have you told my story now," said Lucie, "but forgive me, don't you want to read? I fear I am interrupting your studies!"

"Read? who wants to read?" he cried joyously, "let us go out for a long walk and forget all about sad histories!"

Lucie had a parcel to take to the shoemaker who lived in a village some way off. He was the sweetheart of one of her serving-maids, she told Reinhard, and a dear honest fellow.

They started off through the autumn woods and ate their midday meal together at a little roadside inn. They were like old friends and not a trace of their former antagonism marred their companionship. When they approached the shoemaker's house they heard him singing while he worked. His song was Goethe's "Mit einem gemalten Bande" and he sang it to a lilting, old-fashioned tune:

"Kleine Blumen, kleine Blätter
Streuen mir mit leichter Hand
Gute junge Frühlingsgötter
Tänzelnd auf ein luftig Band."

Reinhard and Lucie, standing near the window out of the singer's sight, smiled at one another, for he sang the words in a country dialect and the rhythm was governed by the necessities of his work—drawled here—accelerated there:

"Zephyr, nimm's auf deine Flügel,
Schling's um meiner Liebsten Kleid!
Und so tritt sie vor den Spiegel
All' in ihrer Munterkeit,
Sieht mit Rosen sich umgeben
Selbst wie eine Rose jung.
Einen Blick, geliebtes Leben!
Und ich bin belohnt genug."

There was a wonderful peace about that little village house, with its autumn robe of russet vine leaves, decorated by the Master Artist of the universe with bunches of grapes, turning blue and lucent in the September sunshine. A cage of canary birds hung on the wall among the leaves. The man's song was full of the hope of life and love, uncomplicated with theory or learned opinion, and Lucie's eyes were dim with tears as she listened:

"Fühle, was dies Herz empfindet,
Reiche frei mir deine Hand,"

Something in the shoemaker's work claimed his attention and he sang the last line again absent-mindedly:

"Reiche frei mir deine Hand,"

Then he burst forth in the full vigour of his strong young voice, a pean of happy love it seemed:

"Und das Band, das uns verbindet
Sei kein schwaches Rosenband!"

The canaries in the cage evidently thought they could out-sing this songster who ventured to warble so loudly, and they lifted up their shrill voices and piped their soaring song in triumphant unison. Lucie turned to Reinhard laughing and a wave of warm colour surged over her face as he drew her to him and kissed her full on the lips.

Hand in hand they went through the autumn woods again. They had spoken no word, nor had they entered the shoemaker's house, for their hearts were too full of the joy his song had brought them. Suddenly Lucie stopped short:

"Upon my word! I fulfilled your ridiculous conditions," she said smiling yet half annoyed, "for I know I laughed and I believe I blushed!"

"Yes, dear heart," he answered, "you laughed and blushed, but I swear I never gave Logau a thought!"

They were very happy, Lucie and Reinhard, in their married life and, like the Colonel, Reinhard always called Lucie "Lux," his beloved light, and the old days before he had known and loved her he spoke of as: "ante lucem" before dawn.

CHAPTER XII.

Meister Gottfried moves down to the town. Böcklin. Adolf Frey. Keller's verse. Conrad Ferdinand Meyer. "Martin Salander." Meister Gottfried's death.

The Sinngedicht had an immediate success. Edition followed edition and Keller's purse was filled as it had never been before. "The end of it will be," he wrote to a friend, "that I shall get rich, become pious and probably a hypocrite." But success came late, Keller was growing old and Regula was a feeble, aged woman now. They were pathetic, these two old people, who had lived out their lives together in spite of the gulf which separated their minds. Keller could not deny that the road up to the house on the Bürgli tried him and the plan of moving into the town was mooted again. Of course Meister Gottfried grumbled. The noise of the streets would interfere with his work, must he leave that grand view over the lake, must he renounce the vision of the mountains' serenity? In the summertime there would be no lime tree beneath the window! It may seem a small thing to us, this moving from one house to another, but to the poet it meant the sacrifice of much that was invaluable to him: silence and the lime tree. What do we know of the songs the poet heard whispering in the branches? What do we know of the message of the breezes — of "the wind which blows legend laden through the trees?"

Meister Gottfried protested that the road was made easy by the assistance of his friends who so willingly let him lean on their strong arms. There were many who would have been proud to help that little old man with the big head and the awkward stunted body, Switzerland's great genius, one of the kings of the world. For Meister Gottfried's friendship was sought by all nowadays; there were discreet if eager listeners

when he sat in the tavern and, the brown eyes glowing behind the spectacles he was always forced to wear, he spun marvellous yarns in that deep, sonorous voice of his. But to the eternal loneliness of genius, the inevitable loneliness of old-age was added now, and only one or two younger men were admitted to the smallest degree of intimacy. Böcklin was one of these and another was Adolf Frey, a young author who afterwards wrote his "Recollections of Gottfried Keller," the only really loving tribute to the poet in the whole vast Keller literature. These "Erinnerungen" have something of the humour, the tenderness and the charm of Barrie's "Margaret Ogilvy" that picture of an old woman, Barrie's mother, which not even the most callous can read without tears.

If youth has its tyrant: passion, so has old-age another fetter to endure: physical weakness, and Keller had to give in at last and move down to a more accessible region of the town. He hired a dwelling in the house where he had visited his friend Schulz, years ago when his heart had been aflame for Louise Rieter, and where too Betty Tendering had appeared inquiring for Gottfried Keller's mother. The circle of his days was closing in, it was the twilight of that long, uneventful life which he had lived so passionately, so intensely, in the manifold eventfulness of his mind. But he had not finished his task, what he had accomplished seemed trifling to him. His political book was unwritten. When he was younger he had dreamed of a record of the triumph of democracy, but the years had brought him disappointment; not that his ideal was shattered, not that he wavered in his faith in the new religion which must right the wrong, stamp out the cruelty of the ages, and bring freedom of effort to mankind, but his sorrow had begun when he saw, as all of us must see, that "with the golden dragons the vermin come forth." And now, with the unquenchable gallantry of the true poet, the old man resolved to fight the "vermin," to show up the corruption which marred the triumph of the government of the people by the people. He planned to call his book "Excelsior," for the rallying cry of "Onward Humanity" was singing in his undaunted soul, but his friends reminded him of a ballet which was being danced in every European capital

just then under this title, and so he gave the book the name of its hero "Martin Salander." He was unable to commence this work immediately, for he had undertaken to revise his poems for publication.

Nature inspires most of Meister Gottfried's verse, there are few love-songs, yet these are gems, "Little but all roses," as Sappho said.

"Wenn schlanke Lilien wandeln vom Weste leis geschwungen,
 Wä'r doch ein Gang wie deiner ist, nicht gleicherweis' gelungen!
 Wohin du gehst, da ist nicht Gram, da ebnet sich der Pfad,
 So dacht' ich, als vom Garten her dein Schritt mir leis erklungen.
 Und nach dem Takt, in dem du gehst, dem leichten, reizenden
 Hab ich im Nachschaun wiegend mich, dies Liedlein leis
 gesungen - "

There is the deliciously fresh "Liebchen am Morgen" where the poet, who has been writing poems all night, hears his beloved singing at sunrise:

"Mein Mädchen durch den Garten geht
 Und singt halblaute Weisen;
 Mich dünkt ich kenne der Lieder Ton,
 Was gilt's, ich habe sie alle schon
 Heut nacht dort oben gesungen!
 Sie sind herüber geklungen."

But nature and thoughts on life are the chief themes of Keller's verse though there are many political songs. Some of his ballads are charming, especially the "Narr des Grafen von Zimmern," which has something of the quality of quaintness of the "Sieben Legenden." One of the best known poems is the "Abendlied" which, in its absolute sincerity and quiet beauty, is probably the finest he wrote:

"Augen, meine lieben Fensterlein,
 Gebt mir schon so lange holden Schein,
 Lasset freundlich Bild um Bild herein;
 Einmal werdet ihr verdunkelt sein.

Fallen einst die müden Lider zu,
Löschst ihr aus, dann hat die Seele Ruh';
Tastend streift sie ab die Wanderschuh,
Legt sich auch in ihre finstre Truh'.

Noch zwei Fünklein sieht sie glimmend stehn
Wie zwei Sternlein, innerlich zu sehen,
Bis sie schwanken und dann auch vergehen,
Wie von eines Falters Flügelwehn.

Doch noch wandl' ich auf dem Abendfeld,
Nur dem sinkenden Gestirn gesellt,
Trinkt, o Augen, was die Wimper hält
Von dem goldnen Überfluss der Welt!"

His most celebrated poem is the patriotic: "An das Vaterland" which has been taken as Switzerland's national song. It is no martial chant, there is no blatant note in it, as in the German "Deutschland, Deutschland über Alles!" or the proud "Britannia rules the waves," it is a song of love of the poet's homeland, a song of love and yearning:

"O! mein Heimatland! O! mein Vaterland
Wie so innig, feurig lieb ich dich!
Schönste Ros', ob jede mir verblich
Duftest noch an meinem öden Strand.

Als ich arm, doch froh, fremdes Land durchstrich,
Königsland mit deinen Bergen mass,
Tronenflitter bald ob dir vergass,
Wie war da der Bettler stolz auf dich.

Als ich fern dir war, o! Helvetia!
Fasste manchmal mich ein tiefes Leid;
Doch wie kehrte schnell es sich in Freud,
Wenn ich einen deiner Söhne sah!

O! mein Schweizerland, all mein Gut und Hab!
Wann dereinst die letzte Stunde kommt,
Ob ich Schwacher dir auch nichts gefrommt
Nicht versage mir ein stilles Grab!

Werf' ich von mir einst dies mein Staubgewand,
Beten will ich dann zu Gott dem Herrn:
Lasse strahlen deinen schönsten Stern
Nieder auf mein irdisch Vaterland."

There is no doubt that Gottfried Keller's prose is on an infinitely higher level than his verse. He lacks ease, there is something laboured in his versification and it is not melodious poetry. For this reason perhaps he admired Conrad Ferdinand Meyer's verse, for Meyer had precisely what Keller lacked: ease. For all his reverence for Meyer's verse, Keller was always lukewarm in his appreciation of his prose works and unresponsive to the younger author's generous personal affection. The patrician and the burgher's son were of different castes, but it was not the patrician's fault that a gulf remained fixed between him and Keller. It was an abiding sorrow to Conrad Ferdinand. It annoyed Meister Gottfried that, because he and Conrad Ferdinand Meyer were celebrated Swiss authors of the same epoque, people frequently compared their writings and coupled their names together. "Since when has there been a printer's firm called 'Keller and Meyer' I should like to know?" he grumbled, "we are not Siamese twins to be exhibited in a circus."

As Meister Gottfried grew older he became more and more inaccessible to strangers. His friends tried to shield him from intruders because they feared some outburst from the irascible poet. One day however a lady had so pestered Böcklin to procure her an audience with the famous author, that he gave her an introduction, warning her at the same time of the peril of her undertaking, but she was not to be deterred. Böcklin hastened to Keller and told him of the impending invasion, but, with characteristic optimism Meister Gottfried, trusting that some lucky chance would prevent the lady from appearing, settled down to a comfortable afternoon with Böcklin. Then, thinking that a bottle of Rhine wine would promote conversation, he set off to the cellar to fetch it. To Böcklin's dismay, after a few minutes, the door-bell rang. "Who's there?" called a deep voice from the basement.

"Is Herr Doctor Keller at home?" said a woman's voice. Good Heavens! the lady would meet Meister Gottfried in the staircase!

"No, he is not at home," came the emphatic answer as Keller toiled up the stairs, a bottle under each arm.

"But I have got a letter of introduction from Professor Böcklin," the lady said.

"So you are the female who molests people, are you?" Keller replied gruffly and went on, leaving the lady standing on the stairs. These stories of Keller's ruthlessness have been much spoken of and he has been pronounced a boor, but fame has its penalties, and, had he accorded interviews to everybody who asked for them, he would never have written another line. It is a lamentable fact that so many people seem unaware that writing is an art which demands time.

The labour of writing 'Martin Salander' was made onerous to Keller by the street noises beneath his windows. Alas! the balsam of quiet which he had known on the Bürgli was no longer his. And Regula's health was failing fast, but she still stubbornly refused to have a servant to help her. Meister Gottfried turned to his work, but he too felt the weariness of old-age creeping over him, yet "Martin Salander" had to be written and so the old poet toiled on.

Many people have found 'Martin Salander' too specifically Swiss, too local for their taste, but like all real literature, though the setting may be local, the thought is in touch with the great problems of humanity. In 'Martin Salander' we have the conflict of ideal democracy with the practical realisation. As a young man Keller had been in the vanguard of progress, freedom for all was his watch-word, justice for the workers of the world was the glorious figure on his banner. He knew the earnest impatience of youth, the splendid belief in the perfection of a new system. He raged at the cruel length of the workman's hours. How could the artisan have time and strength to be a free man, a thinking being, if he slaved, for a miserable wage, some fourteen hours out of the twenty-four? How could the children grow to be healthy citizens, if they laboured through the long night? The State must protect, and all men, rich and poor,

must realise that "there are no private people," that we are all parts of a vast machine, each responsible for the ultimate good, each moving in conscientious measure, taking heed of the working of each and every other part of the machine. Class hatred was never in Keller's conception, he demanded justice for all classes. He was a true democrat, a builder not a destroyer. Then came his Staatsschreiber epoche, and, being brought into contact with the responsible direction of the great machine, he saw that hurried reform would sweep away the good along with the bad; that revolution, which is the instinctive violence of generous souls against the imperfection of system, that revolution meant chaos, and that chaos meant deeper distress for the very classes which he longed to raise to happy, free, self-governing beings, steadfast in that law unto themselves which is more binding than any imposed law. He realised that improvement must come through evolution, the slow laborious path, not revolution, the fiery brilliant road to chaos. Thus Keller's revolutionary friends began to speak of him as a reactionary. Then he wrote 'Martin Salander' and many called him a renegade, for the book seemed to be an indictment of the People. In a way it is so, for Gottfried Keller thought the People had proved they were not ripe for the liberty which reform had brought them, and, in his bitterness at this realisation, he seemed to be attacking not only the aberrations, but the actual system. This he intended to correct in the sequel to "Martin Salander" which was to be the story of Martin's son, Arnold. For Meister Gottfried knew well enough that a young republic is subject to failures, as a child is subject to infantile diseases, and that the remedy is the open recognition of faults which it is the task of the new generation to understand—and by understanding to correct. Alas! The days were too few, death claimed Meister Gottfried before his task was fully accomplished. Thus "Martin Salander" must be judged as a fragment, as an incomplete picture of democratic ruling. Indeed, it is a description of the disaster brought by proletarian ambition to rise in the social scale, and an account of the corruption of ideals.

The story opens with Martin Salander's return to Zürich

after seven years' absence. Salander, a peasant's son, had become a schoolmaster and married a well-dowered wife. Having gone surety for a friend, Louis Wohlwend, who cheated him out of his wife's money, Salander went out to America to seek his fortune, leaving Marie Salander and her three children in Zürich. Marie started a small inn on the outskirts of the town and, as the garden was cool and shady, many people came there to eat. Thus at first all went well, but the proprietor took half the garden for building purposes and cut down the trees. This ruined the little inn as a country resort and Frau Salander's clientèle fell away. Things went from bad to worse and the day Salander returned, only one family had supped in the garden, eating the poor woman's last provisions. It began to rain and these clients hurried away without paying, telling Frau Salander they would settle the bill another time.

Salander returned full of enthusiasm for the reforms which had taken place in Switzerland during his absence. On his way from the station he came across a group of children playing near the old pump and he paused to watch them. A little apart stood a pale-faced boy and Salander heard two plump little fellows, by their astonishing resemblance to each other evidently twins, demanding what he wanted. The boy answered he was waiting for his mother and the two urchins raised a mocking cry of: "He's got a mother!" which was taken up by the other children. Salander inquired why they were laughing at the boy for having a mother and whether they had none? One of the twins informed him, that he and his brother always said "mama" not "mother." Then the brats began splashing water from the pump over the pale-faced boy, who retaliated, whereupon the twins raised piercing yells for "mama!" Now the "mama" appeared in answer to her pampered offspring's howl and we are introduced to Frau Weidelich, one of the most striking character-sketches in the book. She was dressed in working clothes, a wet apron was tucked up round her ample waist, her sleeves were rolled back and, in one hand, she carried a fashionable atrocity in the way of a hat, which she contemplated with admiring pride. With the other red hand she wiped away the sweat from her brow. She was followed by a

modiste who, visibly scornful of her washerwoman client, was expostulating at her handling the ribbons with her wet hands. Salander saw that the People still despised one another. The washerwoman turned to her squalling offspring and enquired what ailed Isidor and Julian. Salander told her that the children had quarrelled because the one faction spoke of "mother" the other of "mama!"

"That is not pretty of you, my dearies," said the washerwoman turning to her progeny, "the lad can't help it if he has poor, uneducated parents and you ought to thank your Creator that yours are so much more genteel."

"Since when has the People observed these rules of speech?" Salander asked.

"People indeed!" retorted the washerwoman, "we don't belong to the People! We are as good as anyone else! And my children call me "mama" because the gentry's children say mama. And every parent must see that their children rise in the world!"

Now a quiet looking man came up. "What's the matter, wife? And what does this gentleman want?" he said.

"He wants nothing at all," she cried shrilly, "he says we are of the People, if you please, and laughs at my Isidor and Julian for calling me mama!"

Salander answered good-humouredly that he had meant no incivility, he had only asked about a custom which was new to him. The husband explained that the schools being of mixed social grades, the less wealthy children could not submit to be snubbed by the richer, who called their mothers "mama," so it was a settled thing nowadays that "mama" was the correct appellation. He said he personally set little store by this nonsense, but the womankind was wild about it. He touched his cap after he had finished speaking and hurried away. Salander looked at the house into which the genteel washerwoman had retired and saw over a small vegetable shop window the name "Peter Weidelich." So they were called Weidelich, the simple friendly man and his pretentious wife and their ill-mannered scions with the grand names Isidor and Julian!

Salander met the gossip and busybody of the town, Mōni Wighard, who dragged him to a beer-house, anxious to hear his news. Salander told Mōni he had come home a rich man and added casually that his money was drafted to him through the bank Schadenmüller and Co. Then it came out that this bank was run by that very Louis Wohlwend, who had ruined Salander seven years since, and Mōni Wighard said that the bank was insolvent. Salander hastened to a lawyer, but was told there was little to be done and, to add to his misery, he heard that the bank he had employed in America was a fraudulent concern too and had recently ceased payment.

It was after supper by the time Salander reached his wife's inn. He recognised his son Arnold as the pale-faced boy he had seen that afternoon near the old pump and his thoughts flashed back to the well fed, rosy cheeked urchins who had laughed at his boy for speaking of 'mother' instead of 'mama.' He was aghast at finding his family actually starving and, even after he had given them a good supper, he had not the heart to break the news of his financial loss to his wife that night. Some of his capital remained in a solvent bank, but it was a bitter blow to Marie Salander, when, the next day, she heard that the fruits of seven years' hard work and separation had been swept away. Salander was surprised at the violence of her sorrow. He knew her as a gentle, self-restrained being and her tragic fury was a revelation to him. He had worked so hard that he had forgotten that his youth had vanished in those arduous seven years, but she, womanlike, did not forget.

There was nothing for it, Salander must go back to America and work his way up again. He bought his wife a small grocer's business and sailed for the United States. During his stay in his native land his ideal of the People was shaken, he had dreamed of a serious, hard-working populace, elevated by their share in government and the development of education; instead he found everyone set upon the acquirement of wealth, and the dignity of their equality with all men turning to mere vulgar social ambition. He heard of fraud and rapid money-making, he saw that the youth of the town was chiefly set on dancing and drinking. Was the People, the Sovereign People,

not ripe for prosperity? Would prosperity spell materialism only?

Salander returned after three years in America. Once more, by unsparing work, he had earned the sum of which Louis Wohlwend had twice defrauded him. This time he found his wife with a thriving business, his children happy and well educated. He opened a large business and, his worldly prosperity assured, he turned his attention to local politics. Here disappointment awaited him, for he found there was too much blatant talk of republicanism, too little of the spirit of democracy. He spoke out and was met with anger and misunderstanding. Then family troubles claimed him. His daughters, Setti and Netti, had fallen in love with no more eligible or promising youths than the Weidelich twins, Isidor and Julian! These two had been educated for the legal profession and had secured posts in notary's offices. They were so alike that no one knew them apart, unless they examined their ears, one having a crumpled ear. They were a good deal younger than the Salander girls. The love-making had been kept secret from Frau Salander, as even the enamoured damsels understood that her consent to such marriages would be difficult to obtain. The servant-girl betrayed them to their parents, for she was disgusted at the loud-voiced swagger on the subject of her son's conquests of two heiresses, in which Frau Weidelich had indulged at the market.

Salander surprised his daughters and their half-fledged swains at a nocturnal interview in the garden of his business premises. He heard the young sparks expatiating on the pain it would cause them to feel their wives were richer than they, and explaining that their 'Mama' had not meant badly in alluding to her future daughter-in-law's wealth. Salander hereupon stepped out of the bushes where he had been hiding and, placing a hand on each youth's shoulder, drily informed them that he could save them from their dilemma as he could disinherit his daughters. Then he marched the weeping maidens home. An ungenial time followed for the Salander family. Arnold, the son, was studying at a foreign university and thus Martin and Marie Salander were alone with their offended

daughters. At a public meeting, where the candidates for the Grand Council were to be elected, Martin Salander's name was called from among the crowd, and seconded from another side of the assembly, by two voices which he noticed curiously resembled each other in timbre. It was to the proposal of two young clerks that he owed his election as candidate—and these two were Isidor and Julian, his daughter's twin suitors!

One of the scenes which lashed the new political conditions in Switzerland takes place between these two young hopefuls. Puffed with pride at having succeeded in promoting Salander's candidature at one of the first political meetings they had attended, they discussed which party they intended to favour with their adherence. They decided it would be wiser for each brother to enter a different party, thus they would be sure of furthering each other's interest. So Isidor became an "Altliberaler," (approximately a Conservative) while Julian espoused the cause of democracy. The precious pair entered political life and succeeded in being elected to the posts of government notaries in neighboring suburban districts. Frau Weidelich's elation knew no bounds, but her happiness was dashed, as the youths were too full of their self-importance to honour her with their society on the evening of their election. There is a grimly pathetic scene where the Weidelichs wait for their beloved sons. A grand supper had been prepared, a boiled ham and a bottle of good wine, but the old people sat waiting. Then they heard the last train thunder out of the railway station near-by, and they knew that Isidor and Julian must be in it on their way to their new homes. They were shut out of their sons' triumph.

Meanwhile the atmosphere in the Salander house was strained, for Setti and Netti wore martyr's physiognomies and silence reigned at meal-times. But when Salander at dinner read out from the local paper the news of the Weidelich's election, the girls, throwing reticence to the winds, demanded if he still considered their suitors too immature for marriage, now that they were respectable government officials!

The description of how Isidor and Julian come to ask for Netti and Setti's hands in marriage, and of the two damsels'

introduction to Mama Weidelich is a triumph of subtly differentiated vulgarity. Yet here, as in the whole book, we feel that Keller has lost something of his robust humour, that it has changed to biting irony.

The double marriage took place and Salander planned to make the wedding a democratic feast. The simple old-fashioned homeliness was banished, it was all semi-official and political. At the wedding breakfast the pastor made a speech which is a parody of political orations. Only Frau Weidelich enjoyed the conventional, hollow phrases and believed them to be a tribute not merely to Salander, who as she said ostentaciously, was now her relative, but to her brilliant sons. Then on the terrace of the hotel an allegorical play was performed wherein the maiden of the People, Mistress Democracy, argued with old Mr. Liberalism. It ended in a romping dance and Mistress Democracy knocked the ancient gentleman about mercilessly. Salander saw that he had committed a blunder, for his new son-in-law Isidor's liberal friends were offended. There followed a still more untoward incident which, however, was not of Salander's contriving. Two men, disguised as pedlars, appeared on the terrace and taking from their pedlar's packs a number of small objects such as needlecases, thimbles and scissors, offered them to each other saying: "This is an opinion, but I don't think it will do for me!"

"Here is a conviction, will you have it, Brother?"

"This is democratic theory, will you have it or would liberal opinions suit you better?"

Then they sat down and played dice. "I've won that throw, old fellow, so I shall take Liberalism for my party!"

"Well, brother dear, it doesn't much matter," replied the other, "I'll be a democrat then!"

"Now, we'll go and have a drink, but we really must try and remember the names of our parties!" said one.

"Oh! we are settled in life and shall get on well!" answered the other, and the two ran off, arm in arm. Obviously it was a skit on Isidor and Julian's political opinions, and it was no very pleasant ending to the democratic wedding feast, which naïf Martin Salander had hoped would be so fine.

Keller aimed at things which were common knowledge in the town and he gave dire offence to those he hit hard and to others who thought he had attacked the sincerity of the People.

Soon after his daughters' marriage Martin Salander was elected to the Grand Council. He supported all the plans of reform which were on foot in Switzerland, especially throwing his energy into projects for the higher education of the People: compulsory schooling till the fifteenth year: mathematical classes, instruction in the rules of health, courses in advanced history, geography, gymnastics, rifle shooting, a compulsory course of legal training for youths from their eighteenth to their twentieth years. All this Salander explained to his wife, adding: "Of course, there will be singing and music classes and I hope many young men will take up the study of instruments à vent."

"The Lord be praised!" broke in Marie Salander, "when you have turned our young men into prigs and hypochondriacs by your fearful system, at least you allow them a little music to cheer them!" She laughed, but Martin Salander, full of the ardour of his theories, continued his dissertation. He had a scheme too for the education of women: obligatory cookery classes, sewing, medical training, sick nursing as well as other branches of learning. Again Marie Salander interrupted him saying the Swiss would be obliged to import slaves from Africa to do the work of the country, for this over-education would make theoreticians and drones, a nation of professors! All through Marie Salander stands for shrewd common-sense, while Martin Salander is the earnest, unpractical democratic dreamer. She saw the beauty of his vision, but she understood that to precipitate schemes like these would lead to disorganisation only. She was not far enough on the road of socialistic thought to face the certitude of temporary chaos, for the sake of the phantastic dream of an improbable new world.

Salander's public work was interrupted by private sorrow, for neither of his daughter's married lives were happy, although they had fine houses and Isidor and Julian insisted on their wives dressing in silks and satins every day. The young couples avoided their parents' houses, and gradually both the Salanders

and the Weidelichs grew anxious. Marie Salander went to Setti to discover what was amiss. She found her daughter alone, but dressed as for a garden party. There was an atmosphere of discomfort and artificiality in the house. After some time Setti broke the barrier of reserve and owned she was miserable. Isidor was neither cruel nor unfaithful, but there was something wrong, something intangible. Marie Salander questioned her about her sister, Netti. Yes, there too the feeling of something sham and hollow was wrecking the young wife's happiness.

"I think neither Isidor nor Julian have any soul," Setti said.

Marie Salander went to Netti. She too was over-dressed and apparently prosperous, but the mother was aware of the same feeling of discomfort and, at last, Netti confessed her sadness.

Some days later Frau Weidelich came to Marie Salander and said she was nervous about the young people. Did Frau Salander know how things were with them? Probably the wives were at fault, Frau Salander must forgive her if she said this openly. It is a subtle scene, full of the unspoken antagonism which exists between the families of young couples. Both mothers fought for their children, quite politely but none the less dauntlessly they told one another the unpleasant truth. Stung by the washerwoman's assumption that it could not be her beloved sons' fault if the marriages were not perfection, Marie Salander told her that the wives thought the young men had no souls! Then the flood gates of Frau Weidelich's maternal wrath were opened:

"No souls! My sons whom I bore under my heart! How dare you and how dare they, the foolish women who ought to be proud to have been chosen by such men! Did't I bring those two beautiful babies into the world—did't I give them my own soul? If they had no souls would they have become Government Notaries, I should like to know! No souls indeed! The cursed geese, your daughters! Oh! they had better not let me see them!" She paused, choking with anger and sank back in her chair. Frau Salander answered nothing. She felt

the pain in the other woman's heart, and the insulting words went past her. She fetched a glass of wine and gave it to her pitiful enemy. Frau Weidelich sipped it, her angry, miserable eyes fixed on the woman who had ventured to give birth to the two "cursed geese," who could not understand her beautiful, genteel, wonderful Government Notary sons!

The door bell rang and Jakob Weidelich came in. His face was ashen-grey and his clothes disordered. Frau Weidelich's anger changed its butt.

"What's the matter?" she cried, "how dare you come out, on a Sunday morning too, without a collar, without a tie! Your waistcoat is buttoned wrong! And that old hat! The devil take it! What do you look like?"

Her husband looked at her dully and made no answer. In a changed voice she said: "Jakob, what is it? why do you sit there like a mute? What is it?"

He fumbled in his pocket, finding no handkerchief he wiped the sweat from his brow with his shaking hand. Frau Weidelich got up and passed her handkerchief over his face, an unexpected tenderness in her gesture. He took the kerchief from her and buried his face in it for an instant, then almost in a whisper he said:

"I must tell you—God help me — you must hear it. Our son Isidor has been taken to prison."

Marie Salander drew a sharp breath, while Frau Weidelich's mouth dropped open.

"What can—can they mean? How dare they?" she stammered, "it is all nonsense! They had better look out what they are about!" There was shrill menace in her tone.

"Oh! wife, poor soul," he said huskily, "it is no nonsense. He has been taken up for fraud. I have gone surety for him, but—Frau Salander, can I speak to your husband?"

Suddenly Frau Weidelich burst into a strident laugh. "You only think of yourself as usual, Jakob! What do I care what you have done? Oh! A fine Sunday it is to-day! First she—that woman there—tells me my sons have no souls, then some fool puts Isidor into prison. Oh!—oh! God!" she finished in a wailing cry.

Marie Salander poured out another glass of wine and gave it to the poor woman. Frau Weidelich took it, drank gulpingly, then made the gesture of one who carefully places a glass on a table, but she set it down in the air and it fell to the floor with a tinkling crash. No one noticed it.

"Isidor locked up!" Frau Weidelich cried, "will anyone take him what he needs? And at the right meal-times? Have they got anything good enough for a Government Notary in their dirty, old prison, I should like to know? Oh! and he's never been hungry in his whole life!"

"I think prisoners can order and pay for what they want," Marie Salander said soothingly, "they are allowed that until they are condemned."

"Condemned! A pretty word to use to me of my own son! Condemned! A Government Notary condemned! Oh! Yes, they'll come to a bad end, those fools who have dared molest him!" She turned on Marie Salander like a fury: "and where's his wife—your daughter—is she there with him to take care of him?" She caught hold of Jacob's arm: "Come husband, I must go home and get money to send to the boy," she cried wildly, "they'll have robbed him, of course! Do you hear? oh! do you hear?"

But Jakob Weidelich heard nothing. He sat there, his dazed eyes fixed, and sometimes he shook his head slowly.

A terrible silence fell on the three people. Frau Weidelich, who had sunk down on her chair again, picked at the table-cloth with her toil-wrinkled hands, the poor, coarse fingers trembling and weak as they had never been in all her hard-working life—save perhaps on that day when Isidor and Julian had first seen the light and she had lain abed, weak from child-birth, but so happy.

The clock ticked loudly and it seemed to throb in Marie Salander's brain. In her immense pity for the other woman she had forgotten her own sorrow, but now she remembered what this would mean to her daughter, to Isidor's wife.

The door opened and Martin Salander entered. He looked at the group of stricken people silently for a moment.

"You know?" he asked quietly. Jakob Weidelich got up.

"Yes," he answered, "I have come to ask your advice, Herr Salander, perhaps the thing is not so bad after all?"

But Salander could give him no comfort. Isidor had purloined large sums from his clients, using his official position as a guarantee of honesty. It had been a system of fraud.

"Oh! Lord Jesus!" muttered Frau Weidelich, "why did I not go to church this Sunday? Then I should not have known all this for another hour! I should have had one more hour's happiness!" Suddenly she sprang up: "Come Jakob!" she said harshly, "we must go home!" He rose unsteadily and went towards Salander: "I am sorry," he said, "sorry we have brought you such disgrace." His voice broke, the last word was almost inaudible.

The Weidelichs took their way through the streets, which were crowded with worshippers returning from church. Sometimes Jakob swayed in his gait and she steadied him, sometimes she lurched forward and he caught her arm, thinking she would fall.

"Those two have had a drop early on a Sunday morning!" a passer-by remarked laughing. With the sharp ears of new shame both Weidelichs heard, but they looked neither to right nor left and went on their way to the house near the old pump, where Isidor and Julian had played watched by their proud "Mama."

It is a terrible scene, sordid and heart-breaking, but its poignancy is outdone by the end of Frau Weidelich's life. All through she refused to entertain the hope which Jakob held out to her: "Isidor has failed us, Julian remains," he said, but she answered obstinately:

"How should you know them as I do? I bore them and I know. What one does, the other does—not today perhaps—but to-morrow."

She was not wrong. The next day the news came that Julian had absconded. He had worked in the same way as his brother, though not with him, but directly he heard Isidor had been arrested, he fled. Frau Weidelich had a slight paralytic stroke and was put to bed. She lay there sighing and muttering:

over and over again: "Both gone—both—both my boys—Government Notaries—"

Julian was arrested in Spain and brought back to stand his trial. Jakob Weidelich managed to keep this news from his wife. He tended her with patient gentleness, working too from morning till night. He believed it was his duty to earn enough to refund the sums his sons had embezzled. That poor little milk and vegetable shop of his must be made to pay now if ever. The simple man, who had never known the benefits of the higher education his sons had enjoyed, held his honour sacred.

Frau Weidelich had gained a little strength and, in the evenings, Jakob helped her to an arm-chair in the parlour and propped her up with pillows. On the day of the trial she was sitting there during the afternoon. Jakob was in and out whenever his work permitted. For some time he had not been up to see after her, it was sunset and he was at work in the byre. The time seemed long to the sick woman; all her life she had used time for work, now time was her tyrant, leaden-footed and cruel.

"Both gone, both gone," that was all her thought and yet a torturing flicker of hope stirred in her poor heart. Perhaps in a few months they would come back to her. Who knew? Surely the fools could not keep them there for years? It was all a mistake too—the lawyers would find that out and the judges would decide. Oh! why did not Jakob come? She dragged herself painfully out of her chair and staggered into the bedroom to the open window to call Jakob. She heard voices below in the street.

"It was a great crowd and dead silence when the verdict was spoken." It was the Weidelich's garden-boy talking to a servant-girl:

"Well, and what was the verdict?" the girl asked.

"Twelve years hard labour each of'em. I'm sorry for the old Weidelichs, you know," the boy said.

"Lord love us! Twelve years! What did Isidor and Julian look like when they heard?"

"I could'n't see them," the boy answered, "but I heard someone say they looked dreadful and one fainted."

At this moment Jakob Weidelich came out and sent the chatterers about their business. Then he hurried back to his work. The light was fading and with a sinking heart he went to seek his wife. He knew the bitter hour had come when he must tell her her son's fate. He went up to the parlour, she was not there and he went on to the bedroom. He called her, but no answer came. He struck a match and then he saw her lying by the open window.

"Wife, what are you doing, you poor child?" he said. He raised her and carried her to the bed, and looked into her poor, agonized face. Her eyes turned to him for the last time and then the light in them flickered out for ever.

There is something infinitely touching in the honest, simple man calling his old wife "you poor child" in that last moment of her life, it brings back a breath of far-off courting days, of the tenderness of youth, of something which had lived pure and unsullied through Frau Weidelich's life of striving, boastful vulgarity. It is like a field flower laid reverently on the dead woman's broken heart.

While the Weidelich tragedy was playing Martin Salander was going through the comedy of a middle-aged man's infatuation. Louis Wohlwend had returned to the town. He visited Salander and repaid five thousand francs of the money he had defrauded him of years ago. Martin concluded he had misjudged Wohlwend and made friends with him again. Wohlwend informed him he had married an Hungarian heiress and that as his wife was a child of nature, reared in a wild part of the country, he was anxious she should be befriended by Frau Salander, who would teach her the usages of society. Martin knew that Marie would never be drawn into any pseudo intimacy with this fraudulent adventurer's family, but he was weak enough to be enticed to dine with the Wohlwends. Madame Wohlwend was a handsome uninteresting, over dressed woman, but her sister, Myrrha, was the most beautiful girl Salander had ever beheld. By the end of the meal, where he had drunk a good deal more wine than his wont, he was in the throes of that aftermath of youthful feeling which is so ridiculous to onlookers, however poetic it may seem to the person himself.

The classical learning which Martin had loved as a student revived in his memory and he returned to Marie Salander maundering about Antigone, Nausicaa and Helena.

It is remarkable how Marie Salander's character stands out, for although she is present at most of the scenes, she seldom plays the leading rôle. There is no description of her, and yet we see her vividly and realise that her quiet, clean and kindly influence dominated Martin Salander. We feel she understands her husband, she loves him and treats his exaggerations and his foibles with that humorous leniency which the wisest women accord to men. She is essentially the type of wife who baffles the marauding female and gets her husband back, generally hearing a detailed confession of his infatuation which he represents as a great romance.

It was precisely thus with Martin Salander. He exulted in his old fool's paradise, imagining himself enamoured of Myrrha, partly enraptured by the thrill of being in love, partly proud that he was capable of such ardour, and he concluded that he was an exceptional man, dowered with more lasting youth than his contemporaries.

Arnold Salander came home and one day, when father and son were in the bureau, Louis Wohlwend and Myrrha appeared. Arnold had been in America and had brought back information which confirmed the rumours that Wohlwend was still engaged in a lucrative system of fraud in conjunction with some scoundrels in the United States. Arnold had just been telling his father this, when Wohlwend arrived at the bureau. Salander took the man aside and told him he knew what he was doing, adding that he would take legal proceedings if the stolen money was not refunded.

Meantime Arnold and Myrrha were engaged in conversation and Martin noticed with dismayed jealousy that she was talking very confidently to his son. Wohlwend observed this with satisfaction and having promised Salander full reparation, he called his sister-in-law and departed. Then came the conversation between Arnold and his father which opened the middle-aged man's eyes. Arnold told him that it was easily seen that Wohlwend used the lovely Myrrha as a

decoy for the fools he meant to entangle in financial dealings. It was hard lines on the silly girl, he added. Salander fired up. What did his son mean by calling her a silly girl? Arnold answered calmly that if his father had ever spoken with her, he must have noticed that she was nearly half-witted. Salander flushed to the roots of his grey hair and said no more. That day at the midday meal Arnold told his mother about the Wohlwend visit and added: "Its an ugly game, I suppose that rascal thought he would catch me!" Again Salander turned scarlet and Marie Salander's cheeks burned too.

Though it is not the middle-aged wife's fault if her husband makes a fool of himself, if she loves him, she always feels that she shares in the ridicule he draws on himself.

Marie Salander and Martin looked at each other and she smiled that "fin sourire" of hers, but neither Arnold nor his sisters noticed that the last act of a little drama was being played out before them. Later Salander confessed to his wife but as the Wohlwends, who doubtless considered Swiss air insalubrious since Louis' conversation with Salander, had returned to Hungary, the Myrrha episode was forgotten.

Setti and Netti lived on with their parents and the book closes with a tranquil family scene. Arnold had invited some friends to supper and afterwards Marie Salander and Martin spoke of how there had been no loud-voiced political arguments between the young men. "They know what they want, you see," said Marie Salander shrewdly, "they are not dreamers, but practical men who go their way quietly and peaceably. They will build up the happiness of their country in the future."

It is on this note that the book ends. It is obviously the finis of a first volume. Meister Gottfried had shown up the corruption which existed under the new system, the Weidelich story is a picture of the tragedy brought about by wrongly understood education and Martin Salander himself is a portrait of the democrat, who is as yet incapable of realising his ideals. Arnold Salander's history was to have shown how these ideals could be realised in the second generation. The message of the book is: "go slow." It is wisdom, but wisdom will always be distasteful to youth.

Meister Gottfried knew "Martin Salander" was a failure, though the critics praised the characters in the book and the extraordinary realism of the scenes, but the old poet felt that, though he had achieved a vivid picture, he had not made his meaning clear. Without the sequel his vision was not given to the world and Meister Gottfried knew how few are the days of a man's life. "I do not work easily now, I feel old-age coming over me," he wrote to a friend.

Hardly had he laid down his pen, than a new task awaited him. Regula was very ill and the little old man gave his strength to the tending of this comrade of a lifetime. She suffered and he was untiring in his care of her. Through the long nights Meister Gottfried kept faithful vigil beside Regula's sick bed; all day he was there ready to help her if he could. What a picture he might have drawn of the aged poet helping the old sister down the difficult path to the grave! But this time it was no realistic art which claimed him, it was inexorable reality itself which he was called to meet. We know little of those long hours of suffering, for the two old people fought them through as they had lived—alone. Regula died in October 1888. True to his dislike of the clergy, Keller would tolerate no pastor at the funeral. It was a stormy autumn day when Meister Gottfried brought his sister to the cemetery on the "Rehalp." Silent and tearless he stood before the grave. He bowed his head saying simply: "Now, in God's name," then his eyes filled with tears and he turned and went back to the desolate house.

He was absolutely alone now, and though he was too proud to complain, his friends saw that this sorrow was a heavy weight for the old, tired heart to bear. They took him away to Seelisberg the next summer and the weary, brown eyes behind the spectacles, gazed out over the lake, drank in the serene beauty of the mountains.

"Trinkt, o Augen, was die Wimper hält,
Von dem goldnen Überfluss der Welt."

On his seventieth birthday all Switzerland vied with the German lovers of literature to do homage to the lonely poet.

Universities sent him illumined addresses, corporations offered him silver presentation-cups, every newspaper was full of laudatory columns and the little telegraph-office at Seelisberg could hardly cope with the flood of telegrams which poured in for Meister Gottfried Keller. But he was too weary to rejoice in his triumph. When they presented him with the gold medallion with his portrait which Böcklin had designed, he looked at it for a moment: "Gentlemen," he said, "that is the *Finis* to be printed at the end of my song," then the slow tears of old-age rolled down his cheeks. He knew that his working day was done.

That winter in Zürich he fell ill of influenza. His friends told him that he would recover, but he shook his head, he knew that the sand in his hour glass was running out. Fully conscious he dictated his last will and testament: he left the money he had earned to a fund for the widows and orphans of soldiers. "It was not given me to serve my country as a soldier, thus I can make amends perhaps," he said. His books he bequeathed to the Zürich Library.

Then he set himself to wait for death, but the days passed and, though he grew steadily weaker, life clung to him. He even wrote one more letter. With a flash of his old humour he wrote: "I know I shall not be able to do without a hired carriage for very long now." He meant the hearse wherein he would make his last journey.

Many came to say farewell to Meister Gottfried. Conrad Ferdinand Meyer, faithful in spite of many rebuffs, came to him and Keller, like an old warrior who hears the sound of battle, roused himself and spoke of literary plans, of the sequel to "Martin Salander" which he had still to write. He twisted a sheet of paper in his fragile, old fingers as he spoke. "Look," he said, "there is room for a couple of lines here."

"What would you write?" Conrad Ferdinand asked gently.

"It might be:

"Ich dulde
Ich schulde."

Keller answered dreamily. Afterwards he said to Adolf Frey:

"Conrad Ferdinand said I owed no one anything, but in each man's life there are debts he has never paid."

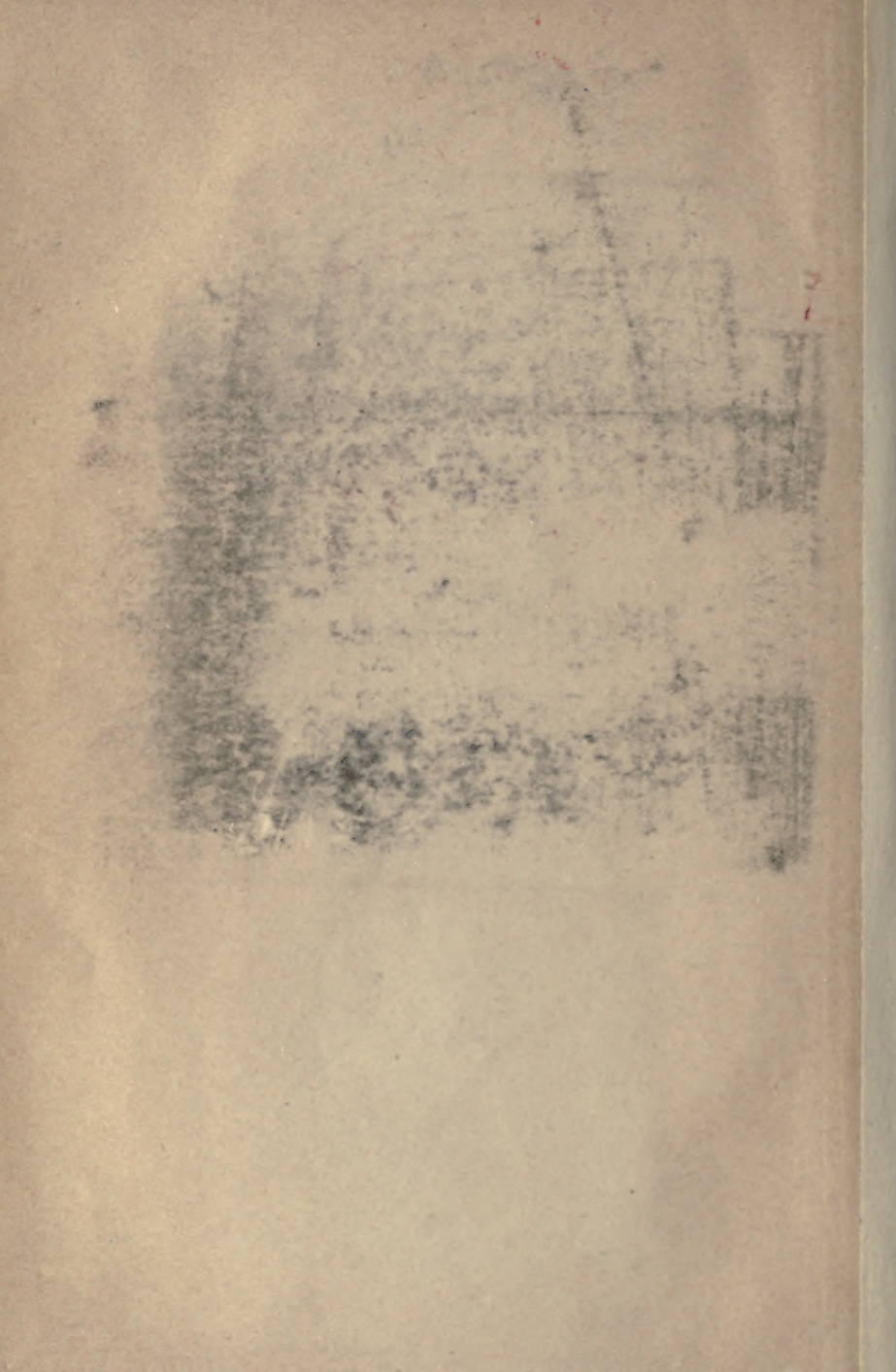
Even as he grew bodily weaker his restless brain spun phantasies. He said that at night two warriors in golden armour stood on guard at his bedside. In careful words he described the helmets and the viziers through which the knight's eyes gazed at him.

Did the children of his brain pass in a reverent procession by his death-bed? Did Anna and Judit, and the witch-child Meretlein come to comfort the Grüne Heinrich as he lay dying? And Hansli Gyr, the stalwart Landsknecht, old Solomon Landolt, Vrenchen and Sali, the piteous lovers, were they there to thank him for his understanding of their hearts? Did little Musa come and dance for him as she had danced for the Blessed Mother? Perhaps Don Correa and his brown lady gave him stately greeting? And Figura Leu, the dear Hanswurstel, did she come to tell him all was peace in the world where lovers see their dreams fulfilled? Did Meister Hadlaub whisper a Minnesong to the poet who had made him live again in those grand pages? For who can tell in what close touch a poet is with the beings he has made out of the travail of his soul?

The days passed and still Meister Gottfried lingered. He spoke little now, but lay there very still, the grey hair flung back from his great, domed brow. Sometimes he whispered a word, and the watchers leaned down to catch his meaning. On July 15th 1900 Böcklin was watching at the bedside. Meister Gottfried opened his eyes and tried to speak, but his voice was dead. Then Böcklin noticed that his fingers moved as though he were writing, and he hastened to fetch pencil and paper, but, when he would have given them to Meister Gottfried, he saw that the weary hand, which had laboured so patiently, was still for ever.

ERRATA.

- Page 32, line 16: *For* "and of a bore" *read* "of a bore"
- Page 116, line 37: *For* "endeavour" *read* "endeavours"
- Page 118, line 20: *For* "intansled" *read* "entangled"
- Page 131, line 9: *For* "Strassbourg" *read* "Strassburg"
- Page 132, line 24: *For* "Scences" *read* "Scenes"
- Page 143, line 16: *For* "Strassbourz" *read* "Strassburg"
- Page 144, line 28: *For* "Strassbourg" *read* "Strassburg"
- Page 153, line 10: *For* "heterogenous" *read* "heterogeneous"
- Page 186, line 7: *For* "him must pav" *read* "must pay him"
- Page 194, line 7: *For* "cloud" *read* "clouds"
- Page 218, line 9: *For* "came to my knowledge then was" *read* "came
to my knowledge was"
- Page 223, line 3: *For* "voics and laughte" *read* "voices and laughter"
- Page 224, line 6: *For* "heals" *read* "heels"
- Page 227, line 13: *For* "not" *read* "no"
- Page 237, line 28: *For* "would marry, the other" *read* "would marry
the other"
- Page 259, line 17: *For* "heals" *read* "heels"
- Page 269, line 14: *For* "Protestan" *read* "Protestant"
- Page 276, line 8: *For* "wandeln" *read* "wandelten"
- Page 277, line 24: *For* "Kænigsländ" *read* "Königslanz"
- Page 292, line 18: *For* "tyran" *read* "tyrant"



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